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The Nation.

October 6, 1984 $1.25; U.K. 65p

EDITORIAL

NEW REAGAN, NEW MONDALE?

Walter Mondale has been trying to get a rise out of Ronald Reagan, but he has not been at all successful. He accused the President of insensitivity to the poor, of disrespect for women and blacks and of intransigence toward the Russians. The President merely shrugged. Then, in desperation, Mondale hurled the ultimate epithet: Reagan is becoming a liberal. "After four years of sounding like Ronald Reagan," the Democratic candidate said in a speech last week at George Washington University, "six weeks before the election he's trying to sound like—Walter Mondale."

Mondale was referring to Reagan's midcampaign conversion to moderation, particularly in foreign affairs, as demonstrated by his address to the United Nations and his decision to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Mondale knows, of course, that the new Reagan is a temporary mutation at best and that after November—if there is life after November—the same old Reagan will reassert himself.

But there is another somewhat parallel problem: Mondale has been trying to sound like Ronald Reagan. The new Mondale approves of the invasion of Grenada and favors belligerent policies toward Nicaragua—including "quarantine" and "interdiction" under certain circumstances. Lately, Mondale has been talking like an old cold war Democrat, untouched by post-Vietnam enlightenment.

That tone is wrong and unwise. It does not fit the realities of international relations, and it already is having disastrous consequences in domestic politics. Mondale's liberal and left supporters are worth more in campaign energy than their numbers suggest. If their enthusiasm flags—and the conservatives do not flock to his cause—the new Mondale may never be heard from again.

SPRINGSTEEN AND REAGAN
Jon Wiener

WHY MONDALE TURNED RIGHT
Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers

THE MEXICAN BAILOUT
Penny Lernoux

JEWS AND THE NEOCONS
Frank Donner

'HURLYBURLY'
Paul Berman

'THE BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET'
Andrew Kopkind

PRIVATIZING THE WAR

WHO'S BEHIND THE AID TO THE *CONTRAS*

JOHN DILLON AND JON LEE ANDERSON

Hidden in the dense forest along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border are thousands of well-fed and well-trained anti-Sandinista soldiers. On a recent visit with the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (F.D.N.), one of three *contra* groups backed by the Central Intelligence Agency, we found the troops faring well and ready to fight despite a cutoff in U.S. covert aid this spring. The F.D.N. forces, some based fifty miles inside Nicaragua's northernmost department, Jinotega, were uncannily cocky, as if the aid cutoff had not affected them.

The Reagan Administration's war against Nicaragua has found other sources of funding. As the death last month of two U.S. mercenaries killed when their helicopter crashed during an attack on a Sandinista training camp shows, the war has become increasingly privatized. Nonmilitary supplies for the anti-Sandinista forces and their families are streaming into Nicaragua from a variety of conservative donors. Traditional humanitarian agencies fear that conservative participation will politicize their relief efforts in the region.

The contributors have received a needed assist from the Reagan Administration. Several times this year relief supplies destined for *contras* based in Honduras got free rides on U.S. military transport, sparking a squabble within the Pentagon over the legality of the shipments.

Much of the aid reaching Honduras is used to sustain families of the *contras* based along the Nicaraguan border. Louisiana State Representative Louis (Woody) Jenkins's Friends of the

(*Continued on Page 318*)

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LETTERS.

A 'NUCLEAR WINTER'

Thetis Island, British Columbia

The Nation has done its readers a disservice with its simplistic discussion of "nuclear winter" [editorial, "Winter Kills," August 18-25]. Permit me to set at least part of the record straight.

Your editorial claims that "the Reagan Pentagon . . . managed to get the nuclear winter report suppressed for a year and a half." However, if you had bothered to check the reference list of the August 1984 *Scientific American* article you refer to, you would have found that the nuclear winter concept was first published in two articles in *Science* in December 1983. A footnote on the first page of one of those articles would have told you of conferences on the subject going back to April 1983. Indeed, given the widespread publicity (including a special hour-long program on Canadian public radio) generated by an October-November 1983 Conference on the World After Nuclear War, why did *The Nation* wait more than eight months to discuss the matter?

Your editorial then goes on to cast scorn on further Pentagon study of nuclear winter. I, for one, think the world would be a much safer place if the military woke up to the appalling consequences of even the most limited nuclear war—it might make them think twice before starting one! We should all applaud efforts to find out more about nuclear winter, and keep up the pressure for full public disclosure of *all* such studies, especially those funded with public money (see *Science*, July 6).

You then suggest that "if one side could develop a bomb that did not produce an abundance of smoke, it would then hold an undeterrable weapon." This reveals a clear misunderstanding of the central concept of nuclear winter. In fact, the winter in question would be caused by vast clouds of smoke, soot and dust generated not by the weapons themselves but by the firestorms and craters they would produce. These are intrinsic to the destruction of cities and hardened military targets, provided that large (nuclear) explosions are created. The "smokeless bomb" is thus a combination chimera and red herring.

Finally, your discussion of Reagan's Star Wars is somewhat out of date. In the August 10 issue of *Science*, the newly appointed manager of the program describes it as protecting U.S. missile silos rather than, "say, Santa Barbara" and other cities.

Jonathan Thornburg

HAVE FAITH

West Brookfield, Mass.

I am shocked by *The Nation*'s crudely anti-religious editorial of September 8 ["Political Opium"]. You actually quoted with approval Diderot's remark that "Mankind shall not be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest." Substitute for "priest" the word "Jew" or "Negro" or "editor" and the blatant bigotry of the statement becomes apparent at once.

Yes, religion has been used to oppress humanity at least since the building of the pyramids. But to suggest, as your editorial does, that there is no essential difference between that sort of "religion" and the faith that moves people like Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez is worse than cruel; it is stupid.

If the struggle to win dignity for all humankind is ever to succeed, we who would share in that struggle must leave our own antihuman prejudices behind us.

Stephen Harvester, Pastor
Whitefield United Methodist Church

'POMPOUS INANITY'

New York City

In his latest balancing act between trenchant insight and pompous inanity, Christopher Hitchens comes down thumpingly on the side of the latter, when he tells us that, so long as religion plays a part in public discourse, the right will always have the edge over the left ["Minority Report," *The Nation*, Sept. 22].

As one infidel—I believe that's what the Rev. W.A. Criswell, one of the Republicans' official theologians, calls us—to another, it matters not one whit whether people get themselves shot in civil rights marches because they believe all humans are created equal or because they think a nonracist society would function more efficiently; whether others become guerrillas fighting for liberation theology or because the guerrillas' program strikes them as more rational than that of the *latifundistas*; or whether small bands of Israeli peaceniks, exposing themselves to public scorn by demonstrating against West Bank settlements, follow the leadership of "progressive" rabbis or the leadership of economists who tell them that the Israeli economy will be crushed by the burden of maintaining the occupation of the West Bank.

Indeed, until a humanist-rationalist morality comes along with a little more fire in its belly, I rather prefer the old-fashioned kind, misguided though it is about the origin of life on earth, if only for its rhetorical elegance and dramatic impact.

The price of this incurable romanticism, true enough, is to concede Archbishop John J. O'Connor's right to speak on abortion but not his right to lie about Geraldine Ferraro's position; it is to grant both Reagan and Mondale the right to go to church a lot but not the right, as President, to lead the country on a religious crusade or a religious anything else; it is to be prepared, from time to time, to make an effort to keep the wall between church and state from crumbling. But before I go along with Hitchens in believing that what is really needed is "a wall . . . between radical ideas and superstitions . . . however well-intentioned," he will have to show me a few radical ideas in the flowering of which superstitions played no part. Superstitions like "the truth shall make you free," or "*patria o muerte*" or the infallibility of the masses.

But I do, of course, agree with Hitchens's thesis that the force of reason should play a larger part in human affairs (as the Pope said during his visit to Canada). *Peter Weiss*

HITCHENS REPLIES

Peter Weiss's letter is more smart than it is intelligent, and more rude than it is incisive. I did indeed say that blind faith—the essence of religion—is necessary for the right and unnecessary for the left. It seems I was being too "rational." I would add that since *all* religions cannot be true, we are left with two alternatives. Either one of them is right (which would spoil Weiss's facile ecumenism) or all of them are wrong. Which seems the likeliest proposition? Of course, one can always take the lazy view that it doesn't matter how people think as long as, once in a while, they say the right thing. This "broad-minded" attitude has, at various times, defined both the liberal and the Stalinist. The difficulty is that credulity does not translate into clarity, a point Weiss seems determined to illustrate in his own prose.

Christopher Hitchens

K.A.L. EXCHANGE

We have received numerous letters in response to David Pearson's August 18-25 article, "K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew and When We Knew It," and will feature the correspondence in an exchange in upcoming issues. For more about public reaction to the article, see the editorial on page 309.

CORRECTION

Owing to an editorial misunderstanding there was an error in Alexander Cockburn's "Beat the Devil" of September 29. The sentence reading "The bulk of her [Joan Peters's] supposed 170,000 immigrants from the West Bank and Gaza actually came from Western Galilee and were thus 'indigenous'" should have read "The bulk of her supposed 170,000 immigrants from the West Bank and Gaza could just as well have come from Western Galilee and thus have been 'indigenous.'"

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EDITORIALS.

U.N. Stopover

Every American President's treatment of the United Nations has been far different from what its creators had in mind. Harry Truman signed its charter—reluctantly honoring a promise extracted from him by Franklin Roosevelt—in a week that began with the holocaust he brought on Hiroshima and ended with the devastation he ordered for Nagasaki. Truman proceeded to fashion the United Nations into an instrument of American cold war policy. His use of a specious U.N. Command to widen the Korean War dealt the organization a blow from which it has never recovered.

Dwight Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles turned the United Nations into a diplomatic front in the battle with Godless communism. Behind the debates with Soviet delegates were his threats of massive retaliation and the strategy of brinkmanship. John Kennedy's idealistic rhetoric provided a shabby mask for his *Realpolitik* intentions. As a force of Cuban exiles was heading for the Bay of Pigs he sent U.N. ambassador Adlai Stevenson to lie to the General Assembly's Political Committee about American involvement in the invasion. Kennedy was so amused by the charade that he later called Stevenson "my official liar."

Lyndon Johnson simply ignored the United Nations as he pursued his military and political offensive against upstart Third World adversaries from North Vietnam to the

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Dominican Republic. Richard Nixon's theory of world government, developed and executed by Henry Kissinger, was to eliminate the international body altogether and manage the globe in cautious concert with the Russians. Gerald Ford didn't seem to know who, what or where the United Nations was, and Jimmy Carter could not make up his mind about it. After a hopeful start, he turned his back on multilateral diplomacy, under pressure from neoconservatives and the Israel lobby. He withdrew American participation from the International Labor Organization over a U.N. vote against Israel, and he dropped the U.N.-backed multinational Middle East peace negotiations in Geneva in favor of the Camp David process.

Which brings us to the case of Ronald Reagan. As disrespectful and arrogant as his predecessors may have been, Reagan tops them all in sheer destructiveness. He began his term with an assault on the U.N. system itself by insisting that aid to poorer countries be linked to their votes—for or against the U.S. positions—in the United Nations. He announced that the United States would withdraw from Unesco; he refused to approve the Convention on the Law of the Sea, which was painstakingly negotiated by several Administrations with U.N. support; he attacked the organization's staff and internal machinery; he cut, or threatened to cut, contributions to various U.N. operating budgets; he abused his veto power (as Dulles had accused the Soviet Union of doing) with frivolous, petulant, mean-spirited and isolating votes which did nothing except undermine the already weak foundations of multilateralism. The vetoes have been counterproductive as well: the last one, a lone vote cast against a resolution asking travel rights for Lebanese citizens in Israeli-occupied Lebanon, may have provoked the suicide raid on the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. Although it is impossible to predict the terrorist mentality, the bloodshed last month might have been avoided not only by tighter security measures, as the Democrats are charging, but by a more constructive approach in the Security Council.

Worst of all, the Reagan Administration approached the United Nations as a hostile force and appointed an ambassador who acts more like a bully than a diplomat. The very presence of Jeane Kirkpatrick in a U.N. auditorium changes the character of the proceedings from a debate to a mugging. It is true that the world assembly of sovereign states cannot avoid all conflicts or resolve all differences, but Kirkpatrick is on a demolition project, not a repair job. Other Presidents and their ambassadors have used and abused the United Nations; this one is bent on dismantling it.

Nothing Reagan told the General Assembly last week suggests that his attitude toward the United Nations will change. If his tone was mild and his proposals conciliatory it was only because of the exigencies of an election campaign. Reagan likes to punch first, then kiss, then punch again. His blows have been hard: a massive nuclear arms buildup, the Star Wars strategy, the subjugation of Grenada, the war in Central America and the rhetoric of "evil empire." Against that, the notion of a U.S.-Soviet committee of correspondence must be taken not as a serious proposal for peace but as a convenient debating ploy.

Reagan is his own official liar. Last week he called on Nicaragua to "abandon its policy of subversion," although his Administration is the pre-eminent aggressor in Central America. He urged U.S. corporations to invest in racist South Africa. He bad-mouthed summit meetings, exalted the ideology of the marketplace and struck out boldly for spiritual progress. He invoked Tom Paine, Gandhi and Ignatius Loyola, all of whom have constituents in American politics and some worldwide following as well. But they cannot contradict Reagan's lies, half-truths and hypocrisies. We will need live bodies, independent governments and an unexpected outpouring of votes for that.

Pertschuk's Watch

Last week, Michael Pertschuk retired as a member of the Federal Trade Commission, but he did not go gentle into that gray civilian night. He left behind a trenchant critique of the commission's performance during the Reagan years, running some 250 pages and closing with an epilogue "To the Citizen." His comments will not provoke any choruses of "Auld Lang Syne" at the White House.

As chair of the F.T.C. during the Carter Administration and as one of five commissioners, Pertschuk followed this basic philosophy: government is not necessarily an enemy; its intervention is sometimes needed to check the excesses of the marketplace; and protecting the consumer is not a subversive idea. Those precepts are as compelling today as they were some eighty years ago, when Upton Sinclair's exposé of the meatpacking industry, *The Jungle*, stirred millions of Americans to demand that government inspectors protect them from tainted sausages.

Other times, other scams. Pertschuk's notable campaigns during his tenure included the fight for rules requiring optometrists to give customers a copy of their prescriptions, as well as price lists for comparison shopping. He worked for vigorous enforcement of the F.T.C.'s product-defect yardsticks, especially with regard to automobiles, resulting in millions of dollars in refunds. He sponsored an investigation into the effectiveness of the health warnings on cigarette packages. (His recommendations for rotating specific warnings were embodied in a bill passed by Congress last week.) Over the dissent of F.T.C. chair James Miller, he led the successful battle to push through the rule, which he had sponsored, requiring funeral directors to provide itemized charges to those who request them. Such measures do not represent heavy-handed government interference with the workings of the economy; they provide consumers with the information they need to make rational choices. Wasn't that what old Adam Smith wanted?

We can't resist quoting Pertschuk's characterization of the curious wrecking crew the present Administration has brought to Washington. They are, he writes,

> leaders whose ideology hardens their eyes and ears to misery and injustice. . . . They tend to a heavy, authoritarian style of management: oppressive and bullying to those who work

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for them; servile and sycophantic to those under whose direction they serve. They are casual with the truth. They are preoccupied with control: controlling information, controlling dissent, controlling their media images, controlling leaks, controlling emotions. Order becomes a higher value than creativity, innovation, resourcefulness, commitment. Clothes must be neat and conservative, desks orderly, doors must not squeak, hallways must not be cluttered; painting and polishing their new offices is the first order of business; painting and polishing their images is a consistent order of business.

The flint-hearted babbits now running Washington have never been so effectively skewered. Our thanks to Citizen Pertschuk.

K.A.L. Follow-up

In our September 15 issue we fulminated that the press in general and *The New York Times* in particular were ignoring the important evidence David Pearson provided in our August 18-25 issue that numerous government agencies knew or should have known that K.A.L. Flight 007 was off course shortly after it took off.

On September 7, the day after our lament went to press, Tom Wicker devoted his *Times* column to what he called "A Damning Silence." Wicker criticized the fact that "the press effectively ignored" Pearson's "authoritative" article and the important questions it raised. This negligence, he wrote, illustrates "the depressing complicity with Government into which the free American press has sunk since Vietnam and Watergate."

Despite Wicker's blast and an earlier interview with Pearson on the *Today Show*, neither the press nor Congress has made any serious efforts to lift the curtain of secrecy. Why? Reagan's response to the downing of Flight 007 was one of the critical events of his Administration. It exacerbated the tensions between the superpowers, accelerated the arms race and brought the world closer to war. It also enhanced Reagan's macho image, which is playing so well these days on the campaign circuit.

Where is the outrage? Where are the follow-up investigations? Haven't we learned from Watergate that uncovering a cover-up after the election is not good enough? *The Nation*, at any rate, will continue its investigation. We offer full access to our files to all interested parties.

Rockin' With Ron

No one sings more passionately about the working-class victims of Reaganomics than Bruce Springsteen. So even the most cynical politicos were surprised when President Reagan dedicated himself to fulfilling Springsteen's "dream" in a recent campaign speech. George Will apparently inspired the White House with his September 13 syndicated column, titled "Yankee Doodle Springsteen," which he wrote after attending a Springsteen concert and leaving early. It held up the rock-and-roller as an example of a hard worker dedicated to traditional American values.

Reagan had already lured Michael Jackson into the Rose Garden for a photo opportunity. So when Springsteen quietly declined an invitation to appear at a campaign rally with the President, Reagan did the next best thing: he claimed Springsteen for his side anyway. In a speech in Hammonton, New Jersey, on September 19, Reagan said, "America's future rests in a thousand dreams inside our hearts. It rests in the message of hope in the songs of a man so many young Americans admire: New Jersey's own Bruce Springsteen. And helping you make those dreams come true is what this job of mine is all about."

Performing in Pittsburgh two nights later, Springsteen gave a brief response: "The President was mentioning my name the other day, and I kind of got to wondering what his favorite album must have been. . . . I don't think he's been listening to this one." Then he played "Johnny 99," a song about an unemployed auto worker who gets drunk and shoots someone. When he is sentenced to ninety-nine years in the penitentiary, he tells the judge, "Let 'em shave off my hair and put me on that execution line." (The *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* quoted a Presidential press aide as saying that Reagan listens to Springsteen's records all the time.)

At his performance the following evening, Springsteen talked about visiting Washington and walking from the Lincoln Monument to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He said it was a long way, adding, "And it's a long way from a government that's supposed to represent all of the people to where we are today. . . . and sometimes it's hard to remember that this place belongs to us, that this is our hometown." Then he sang "Our Hometown," about a father showing his young son the closed factories where he once worked.

He told the audience, "There's something really dangerous happening to us out there. We're slowly getting split up into two different Americas. Things are getting taken away from people that need them and given to people that don't need them. And there's a promise being broken." As if to answer George Will's complaint that American workers don't work as hard as Springsteen, he dedicated a song to the rank and file of Steelworkers Local 1397. After the concert he met with the local's president, Ron Weisen, who heads the rank-and-file caucus that challenged the national union bureaucracy in elections this year and will most likely do so next year.

If Reagan could use Springsteen, imagine what he might do with Elvis: taking "Don't Step on My Blue Suede Shoes" as inspiration for standing up to the Russians. Or Muddy Waters: "Got My Mojo Workin'" as an example of black capitalism. The whole thing leaves the rest of us singing "Help!"

JON WIENER

Jon Wiener is the author of Come Together: John Lennon in America *(Random House).*

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DISPATCHES.

■ IRAN: The Shah Papers

In December 1979, one month after the hostages were taken in Iran, President Jimmy Carter ordered four high-level State Department officials to compile a massive study of U.S. involvement in that country. The document was to serve as the basis for the American argument should an international tribunal assemble to hear Teheran's grievances against Washington, as the Iranians had demanded.

Initially, Carter intended the study to be published, saying "We have nothing to be afraid of." But his advisers persuaded him otherwise and tried to make it exempt from release under the Freedom of Information Act. They did not succeed, however, and part of the study, a stack of paper nearly two feet high, has been released under the F.O.I.A.—albeit grudgingly. For every document released, two were denied in whole or in part.

Thus the fullest collection of primary documents on U.S.-Iranian relations continues to be that captured by the Iranian students upon seizing the embassy and subsequently published in some thirty volumes. Below are excerpts from a December 1978 "eyes only" letter from Henry Precht, the State Department's leading expert on Iran during the revolution, to U.S. Ambassador William Sullivan:

> There is real concern in this building about back-channel communications from the White House directly to the Iranians, notably the Brzezinski-Zahedi channel. . . . I met with Brzezinski myself 2 or 3 weeks ago [but] did not tell him . . . that I consider Zahedi [the Shah's Ambassador to the United States] to be a disastrous counterpart in dealing with the Iranian crisis. In my view he is utterly self-serving, lacks good judgment and is prone to act quickly on the basis of bad information. I regret that I believe his counsel has been one of the strongest factors working on opinion in the White House. . . .
>
> . . . The task seems to me to be one of finding a graceful exit for the Shah while gaining a fair amount of credit in doing so for the U.S. . . . I do not think we ourselves ought to name ministers, but our midwifery could be very active. . . . I am afraid that we are losing valuable time and that events may sweep us by, depriving the U.S. of the opportunity to recoup its position in Iran.

Ignore, for a moment, the specific implications of this letter. Simply regard it as a reminder, during this election year, of just how vapid the debate over foreign policy is. Congress's failure to examine postwar U.S. policy toward the Shah is a gross dereliction of duty.

■ SOUTH AFRICA: Bomb Cover-up?

Documents recently released to the Washington Office on Africa under the Freedom of Information Act reveal new details about a mysterious flash that occurred over the South Atlantic on September 22, 1979, and was widely believed to have been caused by a South African nuclear test.

After the flash was detected by an orbiting U.S. Air Force satellite, the Naval Research Laboratory (N.R.L.) and the Defense Intelligence Agency agreed that it had been a "double-pulse" burst, unique to nuclear explosions. But a seemingly cautious President Carter convened a panel of experts who concluded in the spring of 1980, "It is our collective judgment that the September 22 signal was probably not from a nuclear explosion." Asked by a reporter about the N.R.L.'s contrary evidence, the laboratory's director of research, Alan Berman, said, "I have no desire to get into a urinating contest with the White House."

Nevertheless, Berman let the Administration know that the case wasn't closed on the South African bomb. On November 3, 1980, he sent the White House a memorandum about radiation detected in the thyroid glands of Australian sheep at levels five times greater than normal:

> Prior to the examination of samples obtained from animals which were slaughtered in Melbourne, Australia, in late October and early November of 1979, no evidence of 131 I [a fission product emitting gamma radiation] was ever seen in Australian sheep thyroids. . . . Subsequently, no evidence of 131 I has ever been detected. . . . [This presents] a positive case for the proposition that Australian sheep ingested the fission product 131 I during the month of October, 1979.

Meteorological and other data showed that the sheep could have been affected by fallout traveling from the vicinity of the flash. Yet the Administration never modified the report of its panel. Why might the White House have attempted to cover up the fact that Pretoria was testing nuclear weapons? Perhaps the President and his advisers feared that world attention would be drawn to the role the United States and other Western powers played in helping South Africa acquire a nuclear capability, in contravention of U.S. policy promoting nuclear nonproliferation. Perhaps they wanted to conceal Israel's involvement in South Africa's nuclear program—and the possibility that the explosion was a neutron bomb jointly produced by those countries. Or maybe the Administration agreed to keep the evidence it had under wraps in exchange for South African cooperation with the transfer of power in Zimbabwe; Ian Smith was on his way out at about the time the bomb exploded.

The answer: probably all of the above.

■ NATO: Cracks in the Bloc

The State Department is quietly humming to itself these days, now that the Russians have acted with their usual flair in Europe, barring the first visit by an East German premier to Bonn. Before the self-satisfaction gets out of hand, however, Washington ought to consider the mood of its Europeans. It is uneasy. Witness the verbal fisticuffs on display at a meeting of prominent NATO fans in Brussels earlier this year.

Former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt attacked a paper by William Hyland, the new editor of *Foreign Affairs*, saying, "I was struck by the fact that an analysis of Soviet strategy seemed possible without reference to Russian history or Russian national psychology." For that indiscre-

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

tion and others, former U.S. Defense Secretary James Schlesinger charged Schmidt with committing NATO's cardinal sin: divisiveness.

In July, one of the Pentagon's top strategists, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy Richard Perle, visited Bonn to address a meeting sponsored by the Social Democratic Party (S.P.D.) and promptly used the occasion to assail the party's platform on defense policy. Reading from a poor English translation of the platform, he accused the S.P.D. of saying, "West European security interests do not coincide with those of its Atlantic partner." In fact, the document merely stated that those interests "are not exactly the same." Perle topped off his remarks by noting that should the S.P.D. achieve power without changing its position on security issues, the alliance would not survive.

The S.P.D.'s elder statesman, Willy Brandt, who, all agree, possesses an inimitable ability to put young Turks in their place, reminded Perle that "during the S.P.D.'s time in power, [it] fulfilled the German responsibility to the alliance," and suggested that the same could not be said of the Reagan Administration. The Administration's hot-and-cold attitude toward a summit with the Russians is, Brandt said, a "mixture of tragedy and farce."

■ SAUDI ARABIA: Biased Business

In 1974, faced with the prospect of seemingly endless multibillion-dollar trade deficits with Saudi Arabia, the U.S. government created the U.S.-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation. The idea was to reclaim some Petrodollars by giving U.S. companies a jump in the race to develop the sheikdom. A recent report on the commission by the General Accounting Office provides a rare glimpse of the cultural clash inherent in the U.S.-Saudi "special relationship," of which the joint commission is a key agent.

The most visible problem concerns the role of women. Although the commission is itself headed by a woman, Bonnie Pounds, Saudi tolerance seems to end there, and the U.S. government agencies that work with the joint commission aim to please. Therefore, the Interior Department withdrew its consideration of a woman to fill an advisory position with the Saudi Ministry of Agriculture and Water after learning of the difficult conditions she would face. According to the G.A.O. the department told her that "to pursue this matter would not be in the best interest of her career."

The G.A.O. also looked into the question of whether Americans working for the joint commission were violating U.S. law by complying with the Saudi boycott of companies that do business with Israel, such as Coca-Cola, Ford Motor Company, Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Xerox. Naturally, almost all officials interviewed by the G.A.O. denied using the boycott list, and the government sleuths could uncover no direct violations. But one former U.S. official, in a moment of candor, acknowledged that "his group would not order from companies it knew were on the boycott list."

Who says Americans are incapable of sensitivity to foreign cultures and mores?

■ UNITED STATES: Abrams Unleashed

As Assistant Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Elliott Abrams is supposed to reassure Americans that although some of the most brutal, repressive and corrupt regimes in the world are U.S. allies, this country supports human rights. But in the last few months his primary goal has been to replace Jeane Kirkpatrick as the Reagan Administration's neoconservative hit man. That is the only logical explanation for his recent attacks on the human rights community.

The offensive began in a February interview in *The Wanderer*, a small-circulation, Maryland-based Catholic weekly, in which Abrams castigated the "self-selected" church groups who demonstrate their political bias by denouncing human rights violations in El Salvador but not in Nicaragua. He did not hit his stride, however, until August, in a speech in Florida before the Cuban-American National Foundation, an anti-Castro group. Since many of today's human rights activists are "simply yesterday's peace activists in a more decorous garb," Abrams explained, "it is not surprising that their view of the world is distorted by a seemingly invincible anti-Americanism . . . and by a profound reluctance to criticize America's adversaries."

In his haste to chastise, Abrams has sometimes tripped himself up. In his Florida speech he offered as an example of a human rights activist's bias a ten-year-old statement by Sister Helen Volkomener, who is not around to defend herself. She died in an automobile accident two years ago.

For a factual, up-to-date indictment of Abrams's tenure, read the September report published by the Center for International Policy in Washington. The author, Caleb Rossiter, traces the rise of the human rights bureau under Patricia Derian in the Carter Administration and its fall under Abrams. Derian's team, many of whose members were not career officials in the State Department, created a stir within the bureaucracy, but the tangible results were thwarted by the "clientalism" and jealousy over turf among the various foreign desks. Yet for all the Carter Administration's waffling, its record, according to the report, "remains one by which to measure succeeding administrations."

Balance—a criterion Abrams loves to invoke against human rights groups—is precisely where the report found the Assistant Secretary's bureau deficient in comparison with its predecessor. For example, during Derian's tenure, the government opposed Multilateral Development Bank loans to regimes of the left and right with fairly equal frequency. Under the Reagan Administration, however, it opposed 31 percent of all loans to left-wing regimes and only 3 percent of those to right-wing governments. Call it a tilt. Little wonder the report concludes that under Abrams, human rights policy amounts to "an anticommunist campaign rather than a serious effort to change human rights practices" among friends and foes alike.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

By the standards of the Reagan Administration, it appears that an act is not immoral if it is not illegal. And by the standards of special prosecutor Jacob A. Stein, an act is not illegal unless the defendant confesses, sobbingly, to a crime. These twin laxities have combined in a sickly whitewash of Edwin Meese.

See how the trick is done. Having given Meese the benefit of the doubt on all disputed matters of evidence, Stein announces, in his report released September 20, that he can find "no basis for prosecution" of the man on criminal charges. Stein adds piously that though he was asked by numerous authorities to offer an opinion on Meese's fitness for the post of Attorney General, he did not feel able to do so. President Reagan, in welcoming the report, announces in his oleaginous way, "It's always gratifying when the honor of a just man is vindicated." Meese's honor and capacity for justice were not, luckily for him and his President, the subject of the investigation.

To speak legalistically, Stein was within his brief in avoiding the question of Meese's integrity. The empowering statute confines a special prosecutor to the question of whether a Federal law has been broken. But Stein went out of his way to impose the narrowest possible interpretation on his labors. In July, for instance, he received a letter from Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, asking that as an independent counsel, Stein apply the American Bar Association's rules of professional conduct to Meese's case. Stein's reply is wonderful in its minimalism:

> With respect to the ABA's model rules, I note that Mr. Meese was not acting as a lawyer with respect to the matters under investigation. The model rules were drafted for application to the conduct of lawyers.

And Edwin Meese is only trying to become Attorney General of the United States. But let it pass; let it pass.

The pedantry and timidity of the investigation is evident on almost every page of the report. Where euphemism can be employed, it is employed lavishly. Thus we read of "the lack of attention he devoted to his financial disclosure forms." The phrase "lack of attention" here is simply a compliant echo of Meese's claim that he did not recall a $15,000 loan from parties who were obviously interested in his influence at the White House. Where euphemism is not enough, the Stein report resorts to tautology, as in the case of the theft of President Carter's briefing book, where we read that "Mr. Meese's statements to the Congressional committees contain no evidence of Federal criminal law violations by Mr. Meese." Well, they wouldn't, would they?

There were eleven separate inquiries in the investigation. They ranged from the loan question (the coincidence between making loans to the Meese family and being appointed to a well-paid public sinecure) to the cuff-links question (Meese's sticking to some trinkets given him by the government of South Korea). Stein's review of these matters is often unintentionally revealing, as well as unintentionally funny. In deciding to treat Meese like a child on the question of "a nondisclosure," Stein writes that "without evidence of a need or desire on Mr. Meese's part to conceal these matters, only the weakest possible inference of willfulness could be drawn." How humiliating to have to be acquitted like that. Again, in the case of the Federal appointments given to Meese's friends, Stein solemnly says:

> The evidence indicated that Mssrs. Luce, Gray and Sandstrom were longtime supporters and friends of President Reagan. The evidence strongly suggested that none of them needed Mr. Meese's support and influence to obtain Federal jobs.

So that's all right then. (The evidence in this report, by the way, always seems to "indicate" and "suggest.") What Stein implies is that the way things are in this Administration, there is no means of identifying any one person as the source of patronage.

The issue before us is, Should Edwin Meese be Attorney General? Or, to put it another way, can one barrel spoil an entire bad apple? Is Meese the apple or the barrel? It's all too much for Jacob Stein, the sort of clever lawyer with a spotted bow tie who usually appears only in Dirty Harry movies. He ends on a note of extreme unction, washing his hands of the substantive questions by saying:

> There is sufficient interest in those other issues to support an expectation that they will not remain unexplored by those who will strive to do so free of all bias and prejudice.

Yeah, yeah. Meanwhile, Reagan and Meese claim the whole report as a (perfectly timed) vindication. I prefer Meese's envoi. He says, "The experience has taught me a great deal about the special circumstances of official life in Washington." Me, too.

* * *

On January 22 of last year, I wrote a column about the grisly symbiosis between the Moonies and the New Right. One of my choicest examples of this collaboration was *The Washington Times*, a rancid daily sheet launched by cultist freaks, cuff-link donors and White House speechwriters. My little piece drew a vicious letter from James R. Whelan, editor and publisher of *The Times*, who called me a jerk and so on and denied any connection with the Moonies [see "Letters," *The Nation*, March 19, 1983].

Hear Whelan, in his recent tearful resignation speech:

> *The Washington Times* is now firmly in the hands of top officials of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church Movement. *The Washington Times* has become a "Moonie newspaper."

Whelan went on, as if possessed by some demon of self-abnegation, to confirm all that I had said about Col. Bo Hi Pak of the South Korean C.I.A., whom Whelan credits with overall control of the editing and management functions of the daily. The final say in *Times* affairs, Pak told Whelan, will rest with "the elders" of the church.

Good stuff. I don't care whether Whelan apologizes to me for his slanders of last year. I regard *The Washington Times* as, all in all, just another brick in the wall of separation.

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ARTICLES.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY

Why Mondale Turned Right

THOMAS FERGUSON AND JOEL ROGERS

With only six weeks left before the election, Walter Mondale's campaign is reeling. A hostile press portrays him as indecisive, boring and hopelessly tied to corrupt "special interests." His running mate, in the words of a Republican wag, is being "devoured by accountants and bishops." And while his advisers thrash about, trying one campaign tactic after another, Mondale keeps sinking in the polls. As they look to November, something close to despair grips Democratic Party regulars.

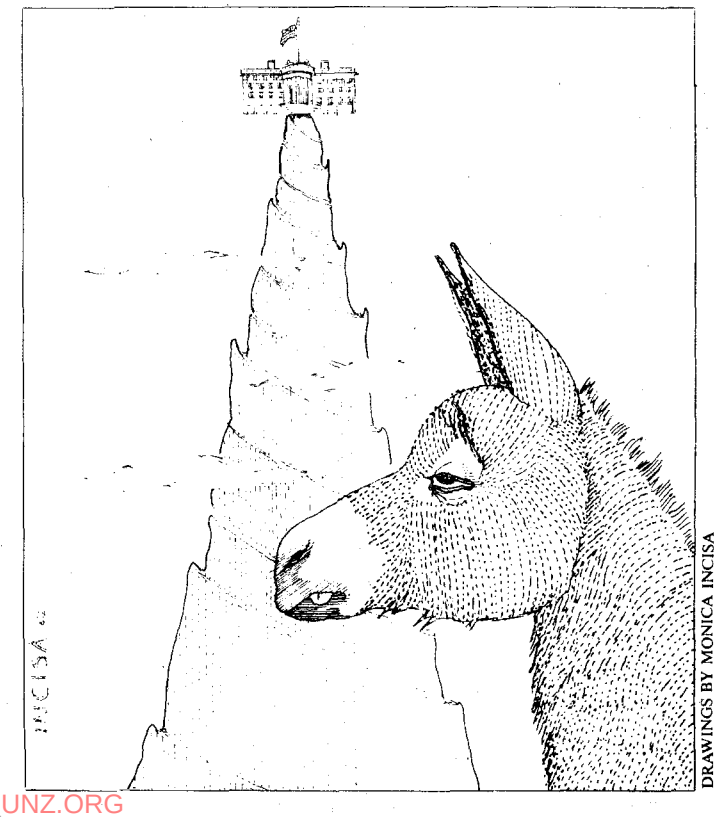
Given Reagan's incumbency, Mondale's road to the White House never figured to be smooth. Still, a year or so ago, Democratic prospects were by no means as bleak as they are now. Reagan seemed vulnerable on a host of issues: fairness, war and peace, the environment, civil rights, Lebanon and Central America among them. There was also excited talk of huge voter registration drives, organized by the Democrats, which promised to recruit millions of anti-Reagan voters to the party. There were, in short, reasons to hope that the Democrats could go on the offensive in 1984, broaden their base and out-democratize Ronald Reagan.

Now that it is clear—barring a miracle reminiscent less of Truman than of Lazarus—that those hopes are to be brutally dashed, it is time to ask how the present catastrophe occurred. Why is Mondale mounting such a feeble and dispirited campaign? Why, after some hopeful signs at the San Francisco convention, did the Democrats de-emphasize the issues of jobs, inequality and nuclear war, and choose the suicidal strategy of campaigning on a lowered deficit, increased taxes and still higher military spending? And why, once it became obvious the strategy was not working, did Walter Mondale continue to pursue it?

To many journalists and pollsters, the answers to those questions are obvious. Mondale is doing so poorly, they say, because Reagan is doing so well, and Reagan does well because he is the Great Communicator, an electoral Music Man, who instinctively inspires trust and defuses hostility in the masses. Other analysts go further. Reagan, they suggest, has a remarkable talent for unlocking the repressed psyche of the American working class. Because workers identify deeply with religion, militarism and Olympic gymnasts, they identify as well with the President's appeal to these fundamental expressions of national character. No matter how often he hurts them or treats them like children, workers cannot break with Ronald Reagan because that would require their breaking with themselves.

The Reagan camp has done everything to encourage such roseate views. In the last few months the President has appeared at more religious shrines than the Virgin Mary and has provided breakfast for more Olympic champions than Wheaties. He has wrapped his campaign in the flag and scored it with country music. And as he closes in on Generalissimo Francisco Franco's world record for the greatest number of indirect endorsements by Catholic bishops, Reagan is clearly making headway among those Americans who believe we must suffer in this world if we are to party in the next.

But most workers do not believe such things, and even if they did, no Republican siren of the working class would need to be evoked to explain a sweeping Reagan victory in November. Let us suppose that voter turnout rises slightly from its dismal 1980 level: say, to 55 percent of the eligible electorate from 52.7 percent. Assume, too, that Reagan beats Mondale by a landslide: say, by taking 58 percent of the two-party vote. Given the infamous class skew of American electoral participation—the fact that the 45 percent of the eligible electorate not participating is sure to be predominantly poor and working class—such a victory



DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

Thomas Ferguson is associate professor of government at the University of Texas, Austin. Joel Rogers is assistant professor of political science at Rutgers University. They are writing Right Turn: The 1984 Election and the Future of American Politics, *to be published next year by Hill & Wang. Their column, "The Political Economy," appears regularly in* The Nation. *Research for this column was assisted by the Project for Investigative Reporting on Money and Politics.*

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would prove little about Reagan's appeal to less affluent voters. Within the increasingly hourglass shape of American income distribution (more unequal now than at any time since World War II), Reagan could achieve it with close to three-quarters of his support coming from rich and upper-middle-class voters. Their reasons for voting for his re-election are obvious. Whether or not they approve of Reagan's stand on abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment, millions of affluent men and women have profited enormously from his first Administration and wish to profit from a second.

But there is more to the story. Most—though, as will be noted below, by no means all—of the American business community is also massing behind Reagan. Grateful for his gigantic cuts in taxes and social spending, huge increases in military outlays, sustained attacks on labor and gutting of environmental law, business is filling G.O.P. coffers at a record pace. Money talks, and while it is considered rude to suggest that American political culture is for sale, simultaneous prime-time half-hour advertisements on the three major networks, such as the ones the Republicans have run, strain the limits of politesse.

While the G.O.P. gushes television spots, the press is working overtime for the President. Only Balzac could do justice to its efforts this year. Except for a few grimaces at his blowing-up-the-Russians joke and a flurry of editorials on his proposed merging of church and state, the press has been very kind to Ronald Reagan. While it labels Mondale the candidate of special interests and baits Ferraro about her family finances, it remains austerely silent on the G.O.P.'s Croesean war chest and declines comment on the phalanx of business figures marching behind the President. In editorial columns, James Reston and others chide Mondale for his (rare) invocations of class differences between the parties. In its news "analysis," *The New York Times* quotes at length from American Enterprise Institute representatives on the dangers attending any Democratic move to the left.

Meanwhile, the Reagan campaign takes full advantage of the powers of incumbency. Hurting in the Farm Belt, the President announces vast grain sales to the Soviet Union. Vulnerable on the unemployment issue, he engineers a political business cycle so great that by itself it practically guarantees his re-election. The press that detailed Jimmy Carter's pork-barrel campaigning in 1980 passes over these political maneuvers.

But if no occult force or new psychoanalytic principle is needed to explain Reagan's electoral strength, one still needs to account for Mondale's lemminglike campaign.

A complete explanation would require a medium-size book. One would have to examine what various business leaders, economists and the mass media have and have not been saying about the deficit and its relation to interest and exchange rates, taxes and government spending. One would also have to analyze how disputes in the business community over trade, military spending, monetary policy and relations with Europe and Latin America have alternately attracted or repelled different blocs of business to or from the Democrats since Reagan took office.

Nevertheless, the biggest pieces of the puzzle are in place, and they can be offered for inspection.

By Election Day 1980, Ronald Reagan had almost wall-to-wall backing from the American business community. But some longtime Democratic Party stalwarts withheld support. Their ranks included many former Democratic Administration figures with strong ties to multinational business, real estate magnates for whom the phrase "public-private partnership" has a unique meaning, investment bankers concerned that too large a military buildup would mean higher deficits (and thus, perhaps, inflation) and a few other specially situated business figures.

After the election, these dissenters began searching for an alternative to Reaganism. They subsidized new Democratic think tanks, such as the Center for National Policy; activist associations, such as Democrats for the 80's; and more informal policy discussion groups. Helped along with their funds, older Democratically oriented think tanks, such as the Brookings Institution, reorganized and took on new staff (often moving rightward in the process). Led in public by new Democratic National Committee chair Charles Manatt, a California banker and attorney, Democratic business elites also opened discussions with the leaders of organized labor. Coming at a time when much of big business was abandoning its longstanding policy of co-opting labor in favor of a policy of outright attack, their initiative presented union officials with a rare chance to conduct business the old-fashioned way, and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership jumped at the opportunity.

The ensuing discussions brought few surprises. Virtually all the Democratic business leaders favored further increases in the military budget, though at a lower rate than Reagan was proposing, and free trade. While most leaders of organized labor were enthusiastic about increasing military spending, the trade question was divisive. Under attack by Reagan and deluged by a tidal wave of imports, the labor chiefs—along with a few businessmen, such as Chrysler's Lee Iacocca, clearly attracted to the idea of government bailouts—wanted the government to play a more active role in shoring up basic industry through protectionist measures and targeted investment. Deep into the Reagan recession, a fairly obvious compromise emerged. The business Democrats accepted a plan calling for a small fund for industry assistance and a weak coordinating board for investment. In the fine print, where all hoped it would stay, they also accepted protection for a few industries with large unions. Labor leaders, in turn, tiptoed away from their earlier practice of staging noisy Solidarity Day demonstrations attacking big business and demanding full employment.

Almost everyone expected either Mondale or Edward Kennedy to carry the banner for this modest industrial policy in the 1984 campaign. But by the time Kennedy withdrew and Mondale stepped forward, worsening trade problems, the turnaround in the domestic economy and the Reagan Administration's spectacular success in debilitating labor had wrecked the basis of the accord.

With the economy recovering, many businesses lost interest in industrial policy altogether. Coincidentally, soaring U.S. interest rates had raised the dollar's value abroad and

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drastically swelled the volume of U.S. imports. In uncompetitive business sectors, this sharpened corporate demands for trade protection and, to force exchange rates down, easier money. In competitive sectors, however, it raised the costs of the limited trade protection Democratic business leaders were advocating.

The budget deficit, expected to mount dramatically over the next several years, also spread general alarm. Although some powerful businesses—notably, weapons producers, for whom the deficit appears as an entry in the sales column, and labor-intensive manufacturers, who hoped to drive down wages by completely removing the social safety net—stood to gain by postponing action on the deficit until after the 1984 election, not everyone could afford to wait. Particular concern emanated from investment banking and insurance companies, whose prosperity depends on investor confidence in long-term bonds. Permanently growing deficits erode such confidence, because investors fear that the government will accede to pressures to pay off the debt, with inflationary consequences, by merely printing money.

Not surprisingly, leading investment bankers were soon overrepresented among the ranks of major contributors to Democratic organizations. Federal Election Commission records show that groups like Democrats for the 80's received substantial funds from partners and other executives at such houses as Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb; Goldman, Sachs; Brown Brothers Harriman; Lazard Frères and Prudential-Bache. (Indeed, executives from Prudential have put so much money into Democratic organizations in the past couple years that the Democrats might consider changing their symbol from the donkey to the Rock of Gibraltar.)

At the same time, the position of organized labor and the poor was becoming increasingly desperate. In America's highly decentralized business community, this naturally led many Democratic business elites to conclude that industrial policy concessions to labor were unnecessary and ought to be bypassed. In the primaries, accordingly, John Glenn and later, with much greater success, Gary Hart, launched campaigns to do just that, and Americans were treated to the sight of Democrats running openly against labor and, a bit more equivocally, against the poor. As the campaign wore on, Mondale himself turned more conservative on labor and social issues. But with Glenn, Hart and Mondale all advocating increases in the military budget and cuts in domestic spending, an opportunity opened on the left for a candidacy that offered fewer guns and more butter. Assisted by contributions from people—such as former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James Akins—who have, perhaps, not always championed the cause of the domestic poor and oppressed, this was one of the several spaces Jesse Jackson's campaign sometimes sought to fill.

In the end, of course, the new Democratic Party rules designed to advantage early front-runners worked as they were supposed to. Walter Mondale, the candidate originally favored by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and most Democratic business elites, squeaked through to gain the nomination. But the price was high. Almost every group in the party came to recognize how violently its interests clashed with those of the others. More immediately, a virtual first mortgage on the Mondale candidacy was taken out by investment bankers, insurance company executives and other business elites for whom a cut in the deficit and further increases in military spending constitute the preferred political program.

These essentially conservative groups now make up the elite core of the Mondale campaign. Their interests explain Mondale's rightward drift on social policy and his obsessive concern with cutting the deficit. They, along with their allies among Democratic multinationalists, the cold warriors of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership, are responsible for his "centrist" views on military spending. Joined daily by recruits from the right, such as James Schlesinger—yet another consultant to an investment house (Shearson Lehman/American Express), a man whose views on military power differ only slightly from those of Ronald Reagan, whom he aided in 1976 against Gerald Ford—they are the reason why voters are increasingly faced not with a choice but only with another echo in the 1984 election. □

LESSONS OF THE MEXICAN BAILOUT

Rescue Missions Impossible

PENNY LERNOUX

Bogotá, Colombia

Ever since a rescue effort led by the International Monetary Fund and the Federal Reserve System saved Mexico, and the West's banking system, from financial collapse in 1982, U.S. bankers have insisted that "crisis management" can cope with the Third World's $768 billion foreign debt. The Mexican bailout is frequently cited by bankers as an example of how quick fixes can help a developing country recover its economic equilibrium.

Actually, Mexico remains in serious straits, with an ongoing recession, unprecedented unemployment and an income distribution that the World Bank claims is worse than El Salvador's. Nor is there any guarantee that Mexico will pay back the loans from U.S. banks. As for the Mexican rescue operation itself, it underscores the need to find long-term solutions to the debt problems that cripple so many Third World nations.

Contrary to the bankers' self-congratulatory claims, the bailout was plagued by misunderstandings, personality conflicts and stupidity in Washington, which nearly ruined the game. The heretofore undisclosed background to the Mexican bailout has been laid out in revealing detail by columnist Joseph Kraft in *The Mexican Rescue*, a pamphlet published by the New York City-based Group of Thirty, which is concerned with international economic and monetary affairs.

Penny Lernoux is The Nation*'s Latin America correspondent. Her latest book is* In Banks We Trust *(Doubleday).*

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Writing with a dry wit that skewers bankers and government officials alike, Kraft shows that important economic decisions are often determined as much by chance as by design.

By his account, the chief bungler in the affair was not Mexico's corrupt, ambitious President, José López Portillo, but the U.S. Treasury's blindly arrogant Secretary, Donald Regan. Repeatedly warned that Mexico was on the edge of bankruptcy, Regan looked the other way until U.S. banks were confronted with their greatest peril in postwar history. In August 1982, the Mexican government declared it was unable to make further payments on its $88 billion debt, $37.3 billion of which was held by some 800 private banks in the United States and the rest of the world.

Secretary Regan, a pugnacious former Marine Corps colonel who has feuded with Federal Reserve chair Paul Volcker and other politically independent financial experts, has proved "ill-equipped," in Kraft's words, to provide leadership on economic issues, preferring to hang his career on superloyalty to Ronald Reagan. Both the President's and the Secretary's grasp of Latin American affairs is minimal, and few of Secretary Regan's immediate subordinates have experience in foreign relations. They compensate for their lack of expertise with a naïve faith in laissez-faire economics. Beryl Sprinkel, Under Secretary for Monetary Affairs, typifies the attitude. Kraft reports that when Sprinkel was handed a list of problem debtors, including Mexico, Argentina and Poland, he waved it aside with the comment, "The market will take care of them."

Because of the Treasury Department's tough bargaining posture, the Mexican bailout, which had been painstakingly crafted by the I.M.F. and the Federal Reserve, nearly came apart several times. On one such occasion the Mexicans balked at a flagrantly unfair oil deal that the United States had set as a condition for extending a $1 billion loan. The Treasury Department had offered them a little less than $28 a barrel for their oil, even though the world price set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries was $32. Had Mexico accepted, it would have soured its relations with other oil producers, not to mention the political backlash it would have provoked in nationalist quarters at home. The proposal, which a Federal Reserve official called a "chintzy deal," immediately led to an impasse in the bailout negotiations. "Let Rome burn," said López Portillo, meaning the banking system of the colossus to the North. In the end, the Mexicans agreed to the price, with the difference from the OPEC price designated as fees and interest on the bailout loan. As a result, charges on the borrowed $1 billion were increased by 30 percent. Even President Reagan was taken aback by the stiff terms. His Treasury Secretary proudly reported that Reagan had called him "one hard-hearted S.O.B."

Regan proved only slightly more difficult to deal with than Citibank's chair, Walter Wriston, a banker of vigorous views who, says Kraft, emphasizes an "ideological argument": What's good for Citibank is good for the United States. Long at odds with Volcker—Wriston calls the Fed chief "the big Nanny"—his feud had become a personal vendetta by the time of the Mexican debacle. Like other big banks, Citibank wanted the Federal Reserve and the I.M.F. to guarantee repayment of the bad loans it had made to Mexico; those agencies, however, were not about to let the banks off the hook. I.M.F. managing director Jacques de Larosière flatly told Wriston and other bankers that if they didn't ante up $5 billion, the fund would not advance Mexico a penny. Since the rescue package required the I.M.F.'s approval, the banks could choose to throw good money after bad or to lose their entire investment. They accepted the former, but only after kicking and screaming.

Similar arm-twisting by large U.S. banks and the Federal Reserve was applied to smaller banks with exposure in Mexico. Most had less at stake than their counterparts, and they wanted out. However, when they protested, the president of a small Florida bank told Kraft, "Citibank and Bank of America . . . got sore," and "the Federal Reserve leaned on us."

"Who decided what and why? was the question I kept raising," added an embittered Michigan bank vice president.

Even after the banks had been whipped into line, problems continued. "Every day we had a story of a bank about to drop out or a scandal in Mexico or something else gone wrong," recalled Citibank co-chair William Rhodes, who was chosen by the banks to head their advisory committee after Wriston proved recalcitrant. For example, an enormous run on U.S. subsidiaries of Mexican banks was discovered almost by chance. Until a Chemical Bank official added up the total, no one had thought to ask exactly how much the branches were losing to anxious depositors. The total, which translated into increased debt to U.S. creditors, came to $6.5 billion.

Then it turned out that the Mexicans had seriously underestimated their foreign debt. In a wonderful scene which gives an idea of how the world's financial gnomes operate, Kraft relates that during a meeting at which Mexico's smooth Finance Minister, Jesús Silva Herzog, had just reassured his country's foreign creditors that all was under control, his top aide arrived, hair unkempt, eyes bleary, hands shaking, clothes looking as if he had slept in them. The man informed his chief that Mexico was $1 billion off in its calculations. After hearing the news Silva continued as though nothing had happened; from that point on, said a source present at the meeting, everyone simply assumed that Mexico would want an additional $1 billion in loans.

Poor arithmetic was only one complication. The Mexican officials responsible for providing financial data had a habit of disappearing while billions of dollars hung in the balance. After inviting the leading U.S. creditor banks to a strategy meeting in New York City, Mexico's director of public credit vanished. A frantic search located him in a private plane on a Newark Airport runway, about to take off for Mexico City. On another occasion Silva dropped from sight after agreeing to talks with the I.M.F. Rhodes went to Mexico City to look for him but could not find him at his various offices or at home. For days nobody knew the Minister's whereabouts. "It was like Stanley hunting for Livingston," Rhodes later remarked. Silva was finally

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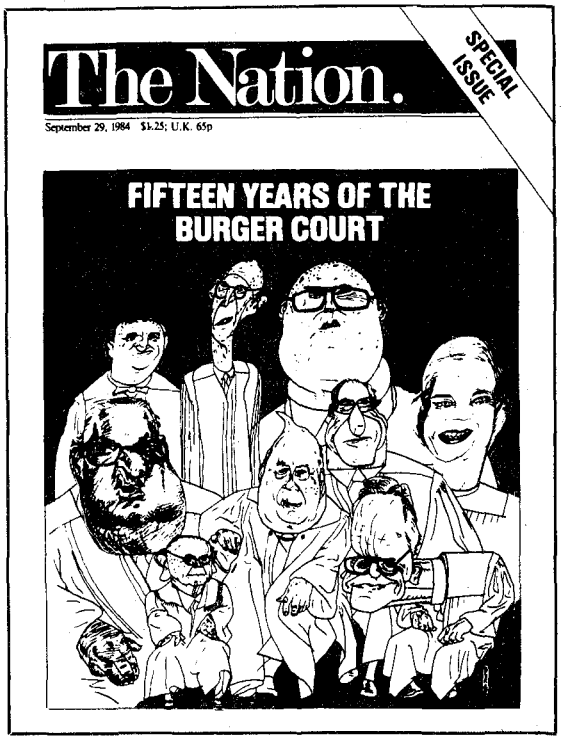
tracked down at a private clinic, where he was recuperating from an appendicitis attack. The news calmed the commercial bankers, who feared another crisis.

But their respite was brief. In August 1982 President López Portillo hit them with another blow when he announced the nationalization of Mexico's banks, thereby freezing negotiations with the I.M.F. The fund's chief negotiator in Mexico City learned of the decision while watching television. Silva was only slightly better informed; he heard about the nationalization decree only hours before it was announced. Eventually the I.M.F. and López Portillo's successor, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, put Humpty Dumpty together again by agreeing on a bailout, which was formalized at the end of that year. Of López Portillo's performance, most Mexicans remember only his promise to defend the value of the peso "like a dog." The lavish $30 million mountaintop retreat the President built for himself at the end of his term, complete with a refrigerator for furs, a library that can hold a million volumes and an astronomical observatory that is better equipped than National University's, came to be known as "The Hill of the Dog."

The Mexican crisis ended the banks' rush to lend money to impoverished countries. Less than six months after the deal was struck, international credit had dried up, plunging the Third World into its worst financial state since the 1930s. Most of the Latin American countries stopped paying principal on their loans; a half-dozen fell behind in interest payments. Bolivia ceased paying entirely in April of this year, while Argentina nearly defaulted twice, in March and June. More cliffhangers await the bankers, including renegotiation of Brazil's $100 billion debt and another round with the Argentines. So common are the crises that many bankers treat them as the natural order of things.

Yet the Mexican experience and, more recently, that of Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela demonstrate that Band-Aid solutions are not the answer. They are too likely to come unstuck because of unexpected political developments or the conflicting personalities of the principal actors. Most of the I.M.F. programs in Latin America have failed to improve the local economic conditions. Governments routinely ignore the terms, and when a country is unable to live up to an agreement, it negotiates a new one it also does not intend to keep. While rolling over the region's debt enables U.S. banks to avoid losses on their quarterly financial statements, the practice only postpones the final reckoning.

In denying the need for longer-term solutions, bankers point to the improvement in Mexico's debt situation, but the country's progress is only relative to the catastrophic situation of two years ago. Nothing has altered the fundamental weaknesses of the Mexican economy, which is stuck in a black hole of debt, so it is only a matter of time before the next threatened default. Mexican businessmen are a good deal less sanguine about the future than their country's creditors in the United States. According to an August article in the Mexico City daily *Excelsior*, the business community believes that unless political and economic structures change substantially, Mexico will be ripe for social upheaval, "with unforeseeable consequences." □



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The *Contras*

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Americas Foundation, for example, distributes food, clothing and medicine to the Misura, a coalition of Miskito, Suma and Rama Indian groups fighting the Sandinistas. Misura leader Steadman Fagoth Müller told us he received two tons of food from the foundation and other groups in July.

Jenkins stores his supplies in a building used by the F.D.N. last year as a safe house in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa. Jenkins also uses Honduran Army trucks and a commercial charter airline called Setco (Servicios Turisticos Compania) to transport his supplies inside the country. According to Honduran military sources, Setco was set up by the C.I.A. to carry *contra* forces and supplies. Jenkins's liaison with the army is Capt. Lionel Luque Jimenez, who is also the army's liaison with the *contra* groups.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has a policy of withholding relief supplies from people within twenty-five miles of a border to avoid charges that it is taking sides in a political conflict. A U.N. relief worker in Honduras was skeptical about the need for assistance to the Indian *contra* families in the border area. "A lot of these people are not refugees," said Tom Hawk, chief of Honduran operations for the World Relief Organization. "They are here because Misura brought them over from Nicaragua. They've been there for three years and been fine until now. Why create this unnecessary dependence?"

But to Jenkins, the *contra* families are simple refugees, even if the head of the household is waging war. "The U.N. and others won't help them because their family members may be fighting," Jenkins told us when he visited Honduras in July. "To me they are refugees just the same as anyone else. To me they deserve more support."

Jenkins acknowledges the ideological impetus behind his effort. "I'm all for the freedom fighters," he said. "I want the Sandinistas kicked out of Nicaragua. That's one of the main motivations for my work. But our role is to help the refugees, not to get involved with combatants."

Jenkins may be a little disingenuous. The aid his and other groups provide by feeding the families of fighters helps support the anti-Sandinista movement. Those voluntary efforts have enabled the C.I.A. to concentrate its depleted funds for the *contras* on arms and ammunition rather than on food and clothing. According to some Honduran Army officers, the F.D.N. says the agency continues to provide about 20 percent of its funding, or approximately $5 million a year, despite the June cutoff.

Jenkins's assistance is but one part of an outpouring of aid that in the last year has totaled about $17 million, according to Administration officials cited in *The New York Times*. The Virginia Beach-based Christian Broadcasting Network reportedly raised the largest chunk of refugee aid, donating $7 million in medical supplies. Other contributors to the *contra* cause include "some well-known companies in the States, Latin America and Europe," according to Mario Calero, a spokesman for the F.D.N. Calero did not identify the companies. His brother Adolpho has told Honduran officers that he raised $5 million in commitments during a recent fund-raising swing through the United States. According to F.D.N. officer Enrique Bermudez Varela, some of the U.S. money has come through the Miami-based Human Development Fund. *Contra* leaders in Honduras have said they've approached the governments of Taiwan, Israel and Japan for financial help or training. A Japanese military adviser, who had been training *contra* forces in the martial arts and other combat skills, was recently spotted on the streets of Tegucigalpa in the company of a U.S. mercenary. A Misura source said a six-man Japanese team spent five months training the rebels. And Honduran officials have hinted that Venezuela, Guatemala and Argentina are contributing to the *contras*.

A principal source of cash and matériel, *contra* officers report, is the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church. Since the cutoff in C.I.A. funds, Causa, a Moonie political group, has shipped money and clothing to the *contras* in Honduras, where it is not unusual to see rebel soldiers wearing Causa T-shirts.

Another source of help is *Soldier of Fortune*, a magazine for military buffs. In El Salvador and Honduras it makes wars as well as covers them. The magazine provides combat boots, canteens and uniforms, and some of its editors and contributors serve as advisers to the Salvadoran Army on counterinsurgency techniques. The *Soldier of Fortune* personnel have one advantage over the fifty-five U.S. military advisers stationed in El Salvador: they are not bound by Congressional restrictions to stay out of combat zones.

The magazine has published its contributors' accounts of fighting alongside *contra* forces in Nicaragua. On the humanitarian side, the publication runs Refugee Relief International, a nonprofit, tax-exempt foundation which it takes pains to separate from its military activities. The foundation provides food, shelter and medicine for civilians displaced by the military's attempts to eradicate the rebels in El Salvador.

Alexander McColl, *Soldier of Fortune*'s special projects instructor, said his refugee relief group arranges for the transport of medical supplies inside the country. A straight-talking Harvard Law School graduate and Vietnam veteran, McColl called the opposition of church and other volunteer organizations to using military transport for relief supplies "the ultimate asshole hypocrisy." He scoffed at their fear that getting the military involved in humanitarian aid will politicize their work. "In other words, they'd rather see people die instead of seeing medical supplies flying down here in olive-drab aircraft."

During a trip to El Salvador in May, McColl told us: "What we are doing here has been briefed to senior policy officials in Washington. They are aware of what we are doing and they approve. They have not told us to stop. In fact,

John Dillon and Jon Lee Anderson are reporters for syndicated columnist Jack Anderson.

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they seem grateful for the private initiatives."

The Administration has been more than grateful. It has permitted military airlifts for the relief supplies, even though that violates the law. A confidential National Security Council directive issued last December ordered the military to carry relief supplies to Central America on a "space available" basis. But Pentagon lawyers and career State Department officials balked at that policy, since military airlifts of civilian supplies are illegal except in cases of natural disaster. Nevertheless, at least three airlifts took place in May and June. And in August, Robert Wolthius, Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, was assigned to arrange airlifts for relief supplies. Wolthius told us he is now "getting on top of the law and the regs." He expects to have a staff to assist him when the new fiscal year begins, this month.

An amendment attached to a defense authorization bill by ultraconservative Senator Jeremiah Denton in June would clear up the legal problems posed by the airlifts. It orders the Pentagon to institute "such procedures as are necessary" for the airlifts.

The man behind the aid influx is Andy Messing, executive director of the National Defense Council, a nonprofit educational and research organization based in Alexandria, Virginia. Messing, who describes himself as an "irregular-warfare expert," admitted in an interview that going to war is his favorite pastime. He's been to El Salvador thirteen times in the last twenty months, and he told us he had received a letter of commendation from the Defense Intelligence Agency for his work there. (A spokesman for the agency said he could find no record of the award.)

The colorful cold warrior takes credit for persuading Senator Denton to introduce the legislation that would legalize the airlifts and for convincing Oliver North of the National Security Council staff to lobby for the shipments at the White House and the Pentagon. He emphasized that his efforts had been to get nonmilitary supplies, not guns and bullets, to Central America. "One pill is worth a thousand bullets," Messing said. "Weapons shipments are not positive, not Judeo-Christian."

Messing said he had also worked this spring with Denton's office and the Air Commandos Association, a group of retired Air Force officers, to stockpile medical supplies destined for Central America at air bases in Selfridge, Michigan, and Fort Meade, Maryland. (A government source said at least one of the Michigan shipments was paid for by "the boys up the river," the C.I.A. This made the shipment legal, since, in Catch-22 fashion, "the agency paying for it has to certify its legality.")

Messing said Denton's bill is needed because Defense Department lawyers "made a squawk" about earlier shipments. "It's a hell of a good amendment," he said. "It takes the monkey off D.O.D.'s back, so they don't have all these planes flying around empty."

Private volunteer organizations aren't so sure they need the military's help. While unwilling to speak for attribution for fear of further widening the split between conservative and liberal relief agencies, representatives of the American Friends Service Committee, Church World Services and the Mennonite Central Committee said they feel Denton's amendment is unnecessary and dangerous. They worry that the conservative push for military airlifts could create a partnership between organizations that support an expanded U.S. military role in the region and the Pentagon, which trains and arms the counterrevolutionaries.

"The Defense Department's involvement may change the apolitical nature of the aid," said one representative, adding that it is possible to arrange emergency assistance under existing law.

Career relief workers at the State Department and the Agency for International Development, as well as Pentagon lawyers, have also tried to discourage the military's involvement in the relief effort. "There is a desire to play by the rules, and the rules are fairly strict," said one Pentagon source, explaining his reluctance to arrange an airlift. "The problems are the legal authority."

Despite this source's hesitations, it is clear that aiding the *contras* by any means has become official policy. U.S. Embassies in Honduras and El Salvador acted as virtual referral services for members of Civilian Military Assistance (C.M.A.), the Alabama-based group which was involved in the September air attack on the Sandinista training camp. Embassy officials had obligingly put C.M.A. members in touch with Salvadoran and Honduran military officers after the organization expressed a desire to donate weapons and military equipment.

Early last month a State Department spokesman admitted that the government has not discouraged private citizens from aiding the *contras*. The Administration has, in fact, welcomed and encouraged the aid influx. A privately funded war is better than no war at all. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Fall Poetry Supplement

THE BANANA DWARF

I turn the market corner, then peer down
the busiest Santo
Domingo
central thoroughfare,
sidewalk traffic as thronged
with surplus foot peddlers and shoppers
as the vehicular jam-up
on the mainstreet intersection. The number
of side-by-side lanes,
in road *or* walkway, varies
from three to ten:
pedestrians, buglike motorcarts, bikes
and cabs whirl and slither around each other,

weave in and out of formation, like couples
on a disco-clogged
dance floor. . . .
At a city block corner,
three roads distant, I see—
gliding swiftly through a thick huddle of heads
and shoulders—a whirring machine!
Is it a crane, two blurred yellow derrick beams
swung on each side
of the advancing figure
or apparatus—
but not mowing down the crush of bodies
it plows across? The heads bob this way and that,

steering clear of those thick yellow posts
hoisting burdens, two
on each side,
revealed to be tall stalks
of bananas—a pair suspended
from each long wooden pole. The banana dwarf
takes springy strides, so much bounce
in pads of his moccasins, he matches a gymnast
on a trampoline;
for length and limber play,
his transverse rods
resemble pole vaulters' posts. Amazingly,
no single bananas fly loose—the ripest clusters,

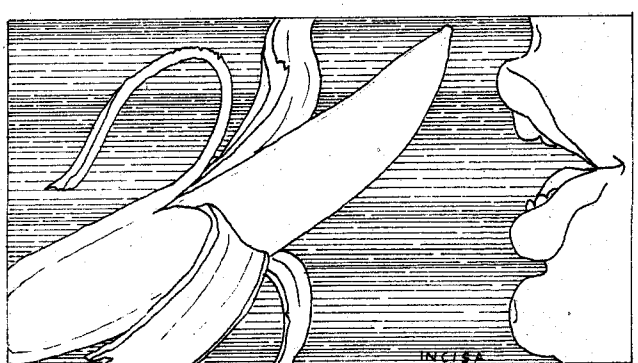
even, stay intact—his difficult balancement
both dance step and juggler's
lofty art.
This spry, red-cheeked midget
looms tall, tall—and oh!—still taller
for the yellow tiered forest of fruit he wields
with his graceful plump shoulders,
his back and neck muscles rippling. The taut fruit
of his flesh: cords
and sinews, sleek flexors bunched
under his skin—
bananas themselves—bulge the human rind
of his upper torso. . . . He sways nearer and nearer.

Though I walk jauntily toward him, I seem
to stand still, to hang
in a pool
of banana fluff, banana
yellow light emitted from the stalks:
a cloud, in which I float, weightless, tongueless,
wanting to speak—to beg a choice
ripe banana to eat! *He flies. He sings the all-saving nutrients,*
blessings of the Banana
God. He plucks
a sample banana here, a sample there, peels
one, offers a munch to each of several passers-by,

drops a pinch of banana in my outstretched
palm. *His bare chest, shoulders,*
shed their skins.
That ripply musculature,
bared and exposed, offers itself up
to the eyes of one and all, to the great yellow
Eye of the Banana Lord, Sun.
And when he glides behind me, my Dominican
pesos flicker
like a new papery tongue
between his teeth,
the extra money bisecting his widest smile,
a nine-banana spiral draped over my wrist, the coil

and whorl of the golden cluster symmetrical
as a pineapple, my small vine-
twist of fruit
wee replica of the many-tiered,
many-wreathed stalks of banana garlands
slung from the Banana Apostle's shoulders. . . . All those
he passes—ladies of wide girth,
men of tall stature, children—must duck, weave, swerve,
but not one Soul
collides with a single gold
shaft! Their moves
guided by his hops, they dodge banana flower-burst,
their dance in traffic as deft as his fleet pirouettes!

L. Lieberman



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THE ELECT

Under the splendid chandeliers
the august heads are almost all
fragile, gray, white-haired or bald
against the backs of thronelike chairs.

They meet in formal membership
to pick successors to their seats,
having eaten the funeral meats,
toasted the names on the brass strips

affixed behind them, tier on tier,
on chairs like upright coffin tops.
When a withered old head drops,
up is boosted a younger's career.

The chamber is ancient and elite.
The lamps pour down a laureate gold.
Beyond the windows blue and cold
winter twilight stains the street,

as up from the river the wind blows
over slabs of a steep graveyard,
its names under snow. A last award:
to be elected one of those.

May Swenson

ATLANTIC CITY 1939

When I was young and returning from
death's door, I served as chaperone,
pale as waxworks, a holiday child,
under the bear laprobe in the back
of my courtesy uncle's Cadillac
careening through a world gone wild.

The Germans pushed into Poland. My
mother sat up front, close pressed
as bees to honey to Uncle Les
and wobbled the stick he shifted by.
I whooped my leftover cough but said
no word, a bear asleep or dead.

Later, in the Boardwalk arcade
when a chirping photographer made
me put my face in the hole with wings,
they snuggled behind him, winked and smiled
as he fussed and clicked the shutter's spring
and there I was corporeal
in the garb of the angel Gabriel,
forever a captive child.

Pink with ardor, not knowing why,
I longed for one of them to die
that slow September by the sea.
He fell on the beach at Normandy.
I never heard her say his name
again without a flush of shame
for my complicity.

Maxine Kumin

THE QUALITY

There is in each body something splendid, I think,
a kind of sheltering, say, the suit of
hours we wear like weather, or instinct striking
the spine's cold accordion, that ripening
of reflex that is the mind's appetite for testimony,
yes, in darkness there is strength hoarded

against damage, say, the flowering of desire imprinted
in the infant's smile as it awakens out of
its dream of creation, I mean pain is not sentiment only,
but a fierce healing, like light rebuilding,
out of darkness, our original boundaries, yet something
is lost in the growing, yes, the greater

the gift the more troubling the sleep, like lovers lost
in the body's cold spin, we are naked
within the shell of our temperament, being greater in
mystery after violation, yes, like strips
of horizon, the spirit unwinds its gift of a single life,
moment by moment, say, that quality of love

that is not physical, but sensed, like vision burning
in the eye's garden, yes, once again spring
arrives after winter's long ash & I accept despair's
selfish fruit as the fermenting of wonder
that springs out of everything lost & dying, say,
that furthering of instinct, which, like

the spider's ambition to infinitely extend its life
another inch of light, glistens like rain
over the attic window where I sat as a boy entranced
with the radiance of first longing, yes,
a quality so distinctly human we glow like light burning
over all the fire-struck windows of our lives.

Philip Schultz

ANDROMEDA

I sit in my cell and stare at an empty page:
Hoping the image hasn't ebbed away,
Dissolved in the dream I dreamed before
The edge of morning touched the Outer Banks.

It's a familiar hell we travel through:
Not as a connoisseur, caressing the artifacts,
But like Dante, in dismayed complicity,
Sighing and groaning with the passionate dead.

The throbbing head drifts forward through the gloom:
A silly menace with its hissing hair
And eyebeams threaded on an iron wire
To fix me wordless in its freezing gaze.

Athena told me not to look. I falter backwards,
Hold my mirror steady and clop the head
Into my magic bag. It's time to put on
My flying shoes, visit that myth-stained shore,

And shake my sword above the dragon's raging shape,
And free that naked beauty from the rocks.

Harvey Gross

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THE JUPON

Over the official luncheon
she remembers, and through the dust-
specked glasses her eyes sparkle, as if
those noble lives, light welled from them,
focus there.
Old Canterbury sleeping
now, that courtly couple side by side,
except when visitors like her would stir
retainers, hounds, the wars, the revelries
they swept round them, a world akin
to far-flung birds, boughs, fountains
spun into a tapestry encompassing
a lady and her love.
But a jupon
it is catches in the speaker's throat,
that pied surcoat that Black Prince wore,
donned for special occasions only, neatly
mended through the centuries by nuns
until, she is convinced, no single snip
of the original remains. And yet, she says,
it is most beautiful.
"Why," you offer,
"just like us: every stitch of the old Adam
gone, only the gusto of that itch prevails
that flung him out beyond the fiery gates,
follies evergreen he'd thereafter prove
to the last ditch—and through our persons—
perfect gardener to.
Does not a slip
of that parent garden, twining itself,
throughout the maze a thread unbreakable
for all the Fall and its long lineage,
in every leaf, still urgently festoon
fruits of its nature? But the blood drawn
to stain them properly!
Should you care
to examine us more closely you would see—
whatever time's repeated tailorings,
one motley patch the cloth, each epoch out
to make its mark—the first design shine
through, no doubt defined more sharply
than when brandnew."

Theodore Weiss

CHICORY

I walk the roadsides and damp wasteplaces
looking for wildflowers. Soon I find
tall clumps of my favorite,
bluest of blue flowers, the chicory,
growing close along stiff-branched stems.
No leaves to speak of, blue says it all.
I pick a dozen and carry them home
like a prize. Placed in an antique
cut-glass vase, they are my possession.
In an hour the bright blue petals close
like the sight of the old,
or something killed on the road.
So it has been with us, my dear,
having each been plucked from its element.

Robert Phillips

LUMINARY

Then, suddenly, she was there—
shining hugely, just above the street,
like the answer risen from a question.
Poised at the horizon
between rows of houses with an air
of subjects at attention,
she settled all her weight
on a great, invisible throne.

For hours the traffic, like the one-
way tide of her desire,
was drawn into that signal stare.
Yet as she rose she shrank, and what
had seemed the dazzling crown
of a sun-descended sovereign
contracted to a pillbox hat
morning would pull down.

Retiring rather late that night,
though still a queen, she fit
into the grid of one windowpane
the size of a chessboard square.
And with room to spare—
enough to allow a pawn
among the advancing stars to share
the spot she rested on.

Mary Jo Salter

THE KING OF BLACK PUDDING

In the dusty and blood-soaked shop
he could not reason the declining regard
for the blood sausage and Barnsley chop—

hacked from Southdown sheep,
two chops per sheep, the Barnsley chops
the Prince of Wales could not complete

three years before his abdication.
Albert Hirst did not complain.
A purveyor of pudding must know his station,

but no matrix or linear algebra
could calculate a value for
the caviar of the north, curse of anaemia.

Each morning he swallowed a slice
or two, to qualify his ware.
Though his manner was very precise,

on his ribs reposed a weight
one likes to see on a butcher
or a pig at the slaughterer's gate.

The pigs despite their brooding
cannot serve as pallbearers
for the king of black pudding.

William Logan

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Courting Disaster

FRANK DONNER

On February 14 the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (A.D.L.) sponsored a luncheon, one of a series dealing with books of importance to American Jewry. The session was devoted to *The Coercive Utopians*, by Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac (Regnery Gateway), a recent book which supports the hard right and attacks liberal activists and journalists as "coercive utopians." Erich Isaac told the audience that the authors' prime concern was the security of the state of Israel, and that their attack on groups such as the National Council of Churches (N.C.C.) and the Institute for Policy Studies (I.P.S.) is justified because those organizations undermine U.S. support for Israel. When asked how such a justification applies to their harsh treatment of Ralph Nader and the consumer protection movement, Rael Jean Isaac responded that Nader's activities undermine freedom, aid socialism and are "pro-Third World," hence hostile to Israel and favorable to the P.L.O.

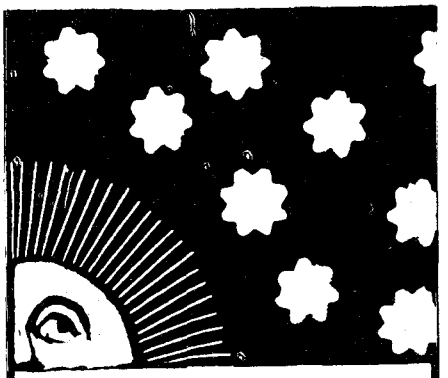
The book deals only marginally with traditional Jewish issues. What is noteworthy is that its Jewish authors, prominent in hard-core, pro-Gush Emunim circles, have embraced extremist domestic political values and are using the imperative of protecting Israel from hostile policies to attract a new Jewish constituency to the far right. Of course, a number of developments have laid the groundwork for the Isaacs' bold initiatives: the emergence of a sizable neoconservative group of Jewish intellectuals, the affirmative action controversy and a heightened ethnocentricity fueled both by recent Holocaust studies and concerns related to Israel. But the drive to steer the Jewish community rightward is now being accelerated by Jewish establishment forces. For example, Rael Jean Isaac's smear job on I.P.S., first published in *Midstream* in the summer of 1980, has been widely trumpeted by other journals. It resulted in the temporary suspension of a grant to I.P.S. from the Field Foundation under pressure from board member Morris Abrams, now departed for the greener pastures of the Civil Rights Commission.

One of the leaders in the campaign to court American Jewry for a move rightward, and in the process to revise its civic identity, has been the A.D.L.'s National Director, Nathan Perlmutter, the author, with his wife, Ruth Ann, of *The Real Anti-Semitism in America* (Arbor House). Published in 1982, this work argues that the primary responsibility of American Jews is the defense of Israel; that policy decisions seemingly unrelated to Jewish concerns, such as reducing the defense budget, may indeed be more anti-Semitic than open expressions of anti-Semitism; and that hostility between Jews and blacks is the result of black anti-Semitism and not, as is frequently charged, of Jewish insensitivity to racial injustice.

Much of the Perlmutters' polemic centers on the assumption that Jewish voting patterns are undergoing a transformation which was already visible in the 1980 election, when many Jews abandoned their traditional Democratic Party affiliation—a shift that the authors state "may yet swell into a sea change in Jewish voting patterns."

The Perlmutters award high honors to the Christian right for its defense of "Jewish interests"—a code phrase for unconditional support of Israel's expansionism coupled with a rejection of the claims of the Palestinians. This is quite startling when we recall that in the 1950s and 1960s the A.D.L. led the Jewish establishment in attacking and monitoring the ultrarightists. Such A.D.L.-sponsored books as Arnold Forster and Benjamin Epstein's *Danger on the Right*, *The Troublemakers* and *The Radical Right* were followed by the classic—also A.D.L.-sponsored—*The Politics of Unreason* by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab. Those books, it must be stressed, were not the result of the A.D.L.'s concern about anti-Semitism alone, but sprang from the conviction that the assumptions and beliefs of the far right are threatening to Jewish values. What could more completely support that conviction than the Reagan Administration's current acquiescence to the Christian right on the issues of school prayer and abortion? The emergence of this alliance has surely embarrassed the Perlmutters, the Isaacs, the Jewish neoconservatives and

Frank Donner is the author of a forthcoming book on police repression.



Women of Fair Hope

PAUL M. GASTON

Women of Fair Hope follows the dreams and achievements of three extraordinary women—an early feminist reformer, an educator, and a freed slave—whose individual desires to create a fairer, more equitable society led them to play important roles in the utopian community of Fairhope, founded at the turn of the century on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay.
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the Jewish Coalition for Reagan-Bush '84—the Republicans' brainchild for fishing for Jewish votes with the bait of a strong Israel.

The Perlmutters positively gush over Jerry Falwell's embrace of an expansionist Israel and brush aside his barely concealed anti-Semitism ("A Jew can make more money accidentally than you can make on purpose") and that of his associates ("God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew"). To be sure, we are told, the Jews are opposed to the agendas of Christian fundamentalism, but the disadvantages of Falwell's religion "simply do not balance the scale" against his concern for the "security of the state of Israel."

The sharp differences between the evangelical and Jewish eschatological scenarios—in the Final Days, according to Falwell, the "raptured" Christians will ascend to heaven leaving behind those Jews who refuse to convert to the True Faith—have not impaired an alliance devoted to driving the Moslems from Jerusalem's Temple Mount and preparing the site, in the Christian version, for the second coming of Christ, or, in the Jewish one, for the rebuilding of the Temple to welcome the Messiah. An ultimate confrontation is deferred by an unwritten truce under which the participants join forces to suit present needs. Jews are in effect counseled by the Perlmutters to praise the Christian Lord as long as the *goyim* pass the ammunition to the Israelis.

Ironically, while the Perlmutters draw the line at the Ku Klux Klan, they prefer to ignore the fact that the Klan draws support from their new ally, the evangelical right. In their professed concern about "real anti-Semitism," they ignore the observation made by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), in an address in November 1980: "It is no coincidence that the rise of right-wing Christian fundamentalism has been accompanied by the most serious outbreak of anti-Semitism in America since World War II." The next year, a resolution of the American Jewish Congress Governing Council condemned the evangelical right for its "deliberate manipulation of fear and suspicion as a political program—fear, especially, of the risks and diversity inherent in democracy and freedom. The solution to uncertainty proposed by the Evangelical Right is to wall us within the limits of their religious doctrine. . . . [Their methods] are deeply offensive to the principles of democracy if not to its laws."

The blind commitment to Greater Israel has also led elements of the Jewish establishment to go along with Israel's role, backed by U.S. largesse, as an arms supplier or military adviser to South Africa and other repressive regimes: Iran, Somoza's Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, Guatemala, Taiwan, Indonesia, Chile, Bolivia and the Philippines. The A.D.L. was actively involved in justifying Israel's arms sales to Guatemala, the most brutal and repressive regime in Central America. When Israel's role in supplying the great bulk of Guatemala's military equipment was exposed, the A.D.L. leapt into the breach, protesting that Guatemala was being unfairly attacked and that its use of force to crush internal unrest had been exaggerated.

In the case of Nicaragua, the A.D.L. worked with Faith Whittlesey, head of the Reagan Administration's Office of Public Liaison, to develop a campaign accusing the Sandinista regime of anti-Semitism, thus arming the *contras* with an appealing issue. This well-orchestrated attack charged first, that in 1978 a number of Sandinistas—not yet in power—had burned the doors of a synagogue in Managua; second, that the privately published Nicaraguan sheet *El Nuevo Diario* had expressed support for the P.L.O.; and third, that Jewish businessmen had been forced to flee the country. The nongovernmental Nicaraguan group that monitors human rights, considered a vigilant, tough outfit, found the charges without merit. The door-burning could not be verified; the second charge, while true, does not constitute anti-Semitism; and as for the Jewish merchants, the fact is that many Somoza cronies from the business community were ousted, including, inevitably, a few Jews. Former U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Anthony Quainton, in a cable to the State Department, rejected the allegation of anti-Semitism as groundless; he was subsequently replaced.

Those developments did not keep President Reagan from playing the anti-Semitism card. In May he addressed a closed session of Whittlesey's group on the persecution of Jews in Nicaragua. The Israeli right also came through in the person of Knesset member Michael Kleiner, who participated in a different May session of the Whittlesey outreach group. Brought here by the right-wing U.S.A. Foundation and speaking as an official representative of the Herut Party of the Likud bloc, Kleiner announced that the conservative movements of Israel and the United States were united in support of American efforts to bring freedom to Central America and Grenada and charged, *inter alia*, that the P.L.O. had trained the Sandinistas. His rousing disquisition, later entered in the *Congressional Record* by an enthusiastic Senator Jesse Helms, raised a question: Was Kleiner's trip a prelude to Israel's continuing the funding of the Nicaraguan *contras* after Congress had denied additional appropriations for that cause?

Another pillar of what the Perlmutters consider "real anti-Semitism" is affirmative action quotas. The Perlmutters insist that it was not the Jews who abandoned the cause of economic equality (for example, by filing briefs against affirmative action quotas in the Supreme Court). No, it was the N.A.A.C.P. and other black groups that betrayed the cause of racial justice by supporting group remedies (quotas) that are racist.

The attack on affirmative action quotas by influential Jewish leaders (now armed with the sword of a Supreme Court decision) has seriously threatened the relationship between blacks and Jews. And, in the wake of the furor in some Jewish circles caused by Jesse Jackson's comments on Jews and by the Louis Farrakhan affair, black leaders have complained that the Jewish opponents of quotas have done nothing to implement their alternative—the recruitment and training of blacks so that they can compete on equal terms in the labor market. It is clear that Jackson's remarks were used by Perlmutter to warn the Democratic Party that it would lose the Jewish vote if it failed to repudiate not only the remarks but Jackson's position supporting both Israel's statehood and the rights of the Palestinians. Perlmutter, who sounded the alarm at an A.D.L. conference of 400 Jewish leaders, countered anticipated charges of racism by pointing out that not all blacks are like Jackson. After all, the Jewish community has applauded "Congressional blacks [who] have been supporters of Israel on important issues." It seems not to have occurred to Perlmutter that affirmative action quotas might be as important to blacks as Israel is to Jews.

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Will the issues relating to Israel work the Perlmutters' desired sea change in Jewish voting patterns? Irving Kristol, in a recent article in *Commentary*, welcomes the possibility. He argues that with the decline of traditional liberalism and the emergence of a new Democratic consensus heavily influenced by blacks and Hispanics hostile to Jewish concerns, the Jews will be left politically homeless and will turn to conservative and neoconservative politics.

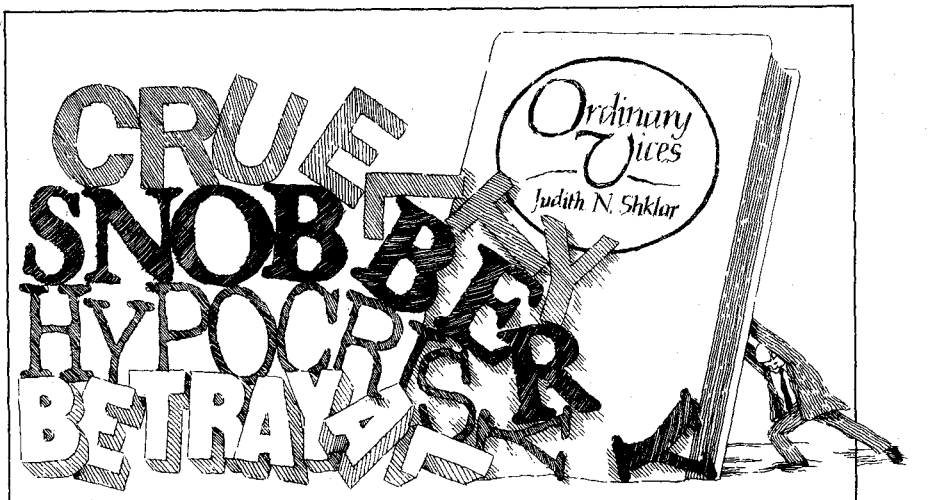
The Promised Land

We now return to the Isaacs, whom we have kept waiting too long. While the Perlmutters appear to have traveled a born-again route into the groves of neoconservatism propelled by Jewish interests, the Isaacs' views are linked to the ultraconservatism of the 1950s and 1960s. But here, too, as they stated at the A.D.L. luncheon, Jewish concerns motivated their attachment to right-wing politics. In particular, such targets as the mainstream Christian churches, I.P.S. and the peace and nuclear freeze movements, which are prominently featured in *The Coercive Utopians*, were originally selected as vehicles for expressing the authors' all-out support for Greater Israel and hostility to the P.L.O.

Here we face something new. The traditional paths to the far right have been nativism, morality, fundamentalism, patriotism and antistatist laissez faire. It would seem that the Perlmutters and the Isaacs have cleared yet another path, which raises a question: Is there a new ultraright constituency building among Jews, based on the security of Israel? Certainly their books both assume that Jewish voters can be influenced or controlled to reject traditional liberal Jewish political agendas that have ceased to serve "Jewish interests." In effect, they contend that dissent on many vital issues is anti-Semitism in the soft.

The Isaacs' spectrum of denigration is much broader than the Perlmutters' and more revealing. Since even in the age of Reagan a public attack on the liberalism that dominates our political culture condemns the accuser as much as the target, the Isaacs have shielded themselves by using the epithet "coercive utopians" for liberals active in causes ranging from peace to environmentalism.

As is traditional with attacks on democratic liberalism, the Isaacs' tract is strongly anti-intellectual. We are assured that intellectualism in general is anathema to our democratic system:



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Americans have always been "balky pragmatists." "Will it work?" is the key question. Secular Jewish intellectuals under attack from the Perlmutters are shafted again by the Isaacs because they have abandoned their religious culture while retaining its "heritage of messianic expectations, which could easily become translated into secular utopianism."

The Isaacs' diatribe against intellectuals mocks the melioristic vision that has always been central to our political life and is reflected in a long series of reforms. This is the sort of anti-intellectualism that fueled McCarthyism and that has consistently marked attacks on reform movements.

The Isaacs' utopians are a special breed, spread out all over the map of liberalism and united by a core deviance: they threaten the status quo, corporate capitalism, the profit system, America's foreign interests and the security of Israel. No flaky *luftmenschen*, the utopians are said to have a "secret agenda," a goal of "collective anarchism" toward which they march along with the old-time subversive cadres—one can hear Marx and Proudhon whirling in their graves—dreaming of a granola paradise, free of pollution and life-threatening technologies as well as economic and social injustice.

Well, what's wrong with that? Plenty. Unlike the isolated visionaries of far-out utopianism, these utopians have enormous followings whose members remain ignorant of their leaders' hidden agendas. The theme of deception, which holds *The Coercive Utopians* together, is announced in the subtitle, *Social Deception by America's Power Players*. Not only are the followers duped about the granola goals of their leaders; they are kept in the dark about intermediate objectives as well. Thus, we are blithely told that "few who rally to the cause of the nuclear freeze know that the groups who created the freeze movement seek unilateral U.S. disarmament and see the United States as the greatest force for evil in the world."

Still, reservations persist. How can the utopians and their duped followers do any harm? After all, every society concerned with self-improvement needs its idealists, and if they have supporters, so much the better. Such a view, argue the Isaacs, merely reflects the success of the utopians' deception. The classic utopians were content to practice politics in the imagination, not in the public forum. But this new breed is "coercive"; they involve themselves in the political process and thus "seek to impose their blueprints in ways that go beyond legitimate persuasion." These sneaky chaps don't get government jobs like your garden variety nonutopians, they "infiltrate" the government in what the authors call a frightening campaign to establish "the most coercive state system known to man." They promulgate vicious rules and regulations, bring pesky class action lawsuits, write articles for Op-Ed pages, dominate the media and raise large sums to carry forward their campaign. Moreover, they are succeeding. Look at the way they have undermined key initiatives of the Reagan Administration. In short, the utopian is clothed in the mantle of the old-time agitator-scapegoat who incites and manipulates an otherwise contented population.

And what a coven of crafty coercers the authors have coralled for us! The list includes Bishop Paul Moore, consumer advocate Ralph Nader, media figures Raymond Bonner, Dan Rather, Les Whitten, Walter Cronkite and the late Larry Stern, environmentalists Amory Lovins and Harvey Wasserman, urban activist Saul Alinsky and I.P.S. officers Robert Borosage and Richard Barnet.

The Isaacs are touted by their publisher as objective scholars: both have earned Ph.D.s from reputable universities, both have published books and Erich Isaac is a professor of geography at the City University of New York. But their scholarly credentials heighten our awareness of the passions that dissolve all pretension to objectivity, leaving only hyperbole, omissions of relevant data, outright distortions and plain untruths. The book reads like a high-toned version of works by such worthies of the 1950s and 1960s as Kent and Phoebe Courtney, Dan Smoot, Carl McIntire, Phyllis Schlafly, Howard Kershner, Myers Lowman and John T. Flynn. But, unlike those earlier writings, it is loaded with footnotes which, instead of validating the text's offerings, confirm its bias.

The Isaacs enjoy the treatment the utopians have received at the hands of John and Louise Rees and gratefully acknowledge access to the Reeses' files. John Rees—con man, impostor, informer, smear artist, publisher of the anticommunist newsletter "Information Digest"—is the pride and joy of the John Birchers, although his credibility has been questioned by the F.B.I. Rees serves as correspondent for the Birch organ, *Review of the News*, and once edited the newsletter of Western Goals, the advocacy group founded by the late Representative Larry McDonald. Rees's latest caper involved files stolen from the Los Angeles Police Department's Red squad. In association with Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, he launched "Early Warning," a newsletter of jugular concern. But it would be unfair to ignore John's wife, Louise, who shares with him a life of deception and betrayal, the feminine member of an odd couple benignly called by the Isaacs "an extraordinary pair of investigative journalists." (They are not informers or infiltrators, you understand; only utopians inform or infiltrate.) After a stint as an informer, this latter-day Mata Hari went to work for the House Internal Security Committee in the fall of 1973, wearing a wig to shield her identity, and wound up in the office of Representative McDonald.

Both Reeses are extolled by the Isaacs as leaders in the fight against utopian advocacy groups, institutes and think tanks financed by left-leaning foundations. Predictably, we are told that the prime offender is I.P.S., the subject of no less than five such attacks, two of which have been effectively dealt with by Aryeh Neier in *The Nation* [see "The I.P.S. and Its Enemies," December 6, 1980, and "An Open Letter To *The Times Magazine*," May 30, 1981].

After publishing her smear article on I.P.S. in *Midstream* in the summer of 1980, Rael Jean Isaac presented her conclusions before a group of ultra-rightists called the National Committee to Restore Internal Security. She explained to committee members that a number of individuals associated with I.P.S. were active supporters of the P.L.O. and that those activists, who were Jewish, were "working very directly against the interest . . . of the Jewish people."

The Isaacs remind us that an understanding of the real dangers posed by these utopian networks requires a look at their support infrastructures: the government, the foundations, the churches, the corporations and the media. They pour forth claims about the utopians' influence on the war on poverty, community action programs, ACTION, Vista, the E.P.A. and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The au-

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thors are particularly incensed with the utopian foundations that "quite self-consciously use the wealth amassed by virtue of the existing system to overturn it." Even for the Isaacs, the discussion is weird. The Ford Foundation gets its knuckles rapped for its financial support of the 1968 Ocean Hill-Brownsville school decentralization program because that decentralization resulted in conflicts between blacks and Jews. The Rockefeller Family Fund flunks out because it supports antinuclear activities. Both Catholics and Protestants funding utopian projects are duly rebuked, not to speak of corporations that have forgotten which side their bread is buttered on.

The authors' credibility is wholly tarnished by the fact that the evidence for their assault on liberal think tanks and foundations draws on the flow of articles subsidized by right-wing think tanks, which are sponsored in turn by sympathetic foundations. One would never know from their book that the network of conservative foundations has greatly expanded during the last two decades. One of many hidden connections here: The May 1981 issue of *The American Spectator* ran an article by the Isaacs, attacking the mainstream churches, titled "Sanctifying Revolution: Protestantism's New Social Gospel." *The American Spectator* was funded at the time by the Alternative Education Foundation of Bloomington, Indiana (now known as The American Spectator Educational Foundation), and the article draws heavily on documents published by the right-wing Institute for Religion and Democracy (I.R.D.). Also nourished by right-wing funding, the I.R.D. is the offspring of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, an umbrella organization formed in 1972 by right-wing ("Jackson") Democrats, which was subsequently taken over by the neoconservatives and by Social Democrats, U.S.A., who, along with conservative evangelicals, dominate the I.R.D.'s board of directors.

In addition to such targets as think tanks and foundations, Ralph Nader's consumer movement, environmentalism, the mainstream Protestant churches and peace activists, the authors are particularly hostile to the media. In the spirit of blaming the messenger for bringing bad news, they insist, with typical extravagance, that "On major topics such as the environment, defense, intelligence and foreign policy, the media

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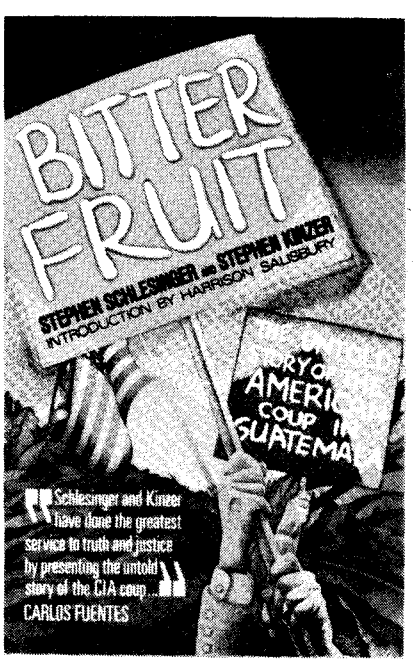
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serve as a vast sounding board for the utopians, while at the same time suppressing sounds the utopians prefer not to hear." It was the media that did in the C.I.A. while keeping silent about the misdeeds of the K.G.B., stressed human rights violations by South Africa but not by Kampuchea, by South Korea but not by North Korea, by Third World countries friendly to the United States but not those hostile to the United States. It gets worse and worse: the media fail to identify properly their utopian sources and indeed protect them. And what is more disgusting than the media's suppression of the fact that Kathy Boudin's father, the lawyer Leonard Boudin, was friendly with "many Communists and individuals sympathetic to Communism"?

In their hyperbolic attack on the media, the authors replace the Reeses with a new guru: Reed Irvine and his Accuracy in Media (AIM). As someone has flippantly observed, citing Irvine as an authority on media is like consulting W.C. Fields as an expert on child rearing. The only media offerings Irvine approves are those congenial to his right-wing sympathies. A virtuoso Red-spotter, Irvine recently characterized Ohio Senator Howard Metzenbaum as "an unrepentant Stalinist."

Last November AIM organized a conference entitled "Biting The Hands That Feed Them—Media Bias Against Free Enterprise and What Major Advertisers Can Do About It," in Greenwich, Connecticut, the stamping ground of many of Irvine's Fortune 500 constituents. Urging the audience to place advertising with politically approved media, he outlined procedures for monitoring sponsored programs. Watch out, he warned, for the "partisan leftist advocacy" journalists with their "hidden agendas." (What else?) Echoing those charges at the same conference Rael Jean Isaac denounced the leftist "privileged social elite" (again with "hidden agendas") that dominates not only the media but large segments of society as well, and warned corporations not to cooperate in their own destruction by contributing to evil causes.

You Can't Get There From Here

The Perlmutters have supported their claim of a sea change in Jewish voting patterns by pointing to the results of the 1980 election, in which President Carter received only 44 percent of the Jewish vote, a decline of 21 percent from the Jewish turnout for McGovern in 1972. For that reason they assert that Jewish voting preferences in the future will depend on such issues as affirmative action quotas and support for U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East. Liberalism will be rejected if it favors self-rule for the Palestinians, which, the authors tell us, would be antidemocratic.

That forecast is wholly unsupported. To begin with, the decline in Jewish Democratic votes was, in part, attributable to the same disillusionment that influenced the population as a whole to desert the Democrats. In addition, many Jews were offended by Carter's "born-again Christian" posturings. Then, too, the Perlmutters neglect to mention that 17 percent of the Jewish vote went to John Anderson and only 39 percent to Reagan.

It is plain that the trumpeted dawn of a Jewish political right will come as something of a surprise to the Jewish community as a whole and to its leadership. A *Commentary* symposium in January 1980 on "Liberalism and the Jews" drew fifty-two replies mostly in support of liberalism; there was no indication of a substantial drift from the Democratic Party nor any confirmation for the view that the main danger to Jews and their values comes from the left. Among the respondents, who consisted of Jewish religious and secular leaders, intellectuals and editors, was Nathan Perlmutter who wrote, "The politics of Jews are indeed undergoing marked change, but . . . our loyalty to the liberal policy has been constant." How's that for a sea change?

Two polls conducted for the American Jewish Committee (A.J.C.) by Professor Steven Cohen of Queens College and Brandeis University sharply dispute the sea change thesis. Sixty-six percent of those polled in the 1981 National Survey of American Jews preferred the Democratic Party. Moreover, by clear majorities Jews approved affirmative action (56 percent to 26 percent), the Equal Rights Amendment (73 percent to 17 percent), the employment of homosexuals as public school teachers (67 percent to 23 percent) and government financing of abortions (52 percent to 38 percent). Despite the hostility stirred by Soviet anti-Semitism, the respondents opposed substantial increases in defense spending (49 percent to 35 percent) and cuts in social welfare spending (58 percent to 33 percent). The returns supported the liberal agenda on three issues: capital punishment (72 percent to 19 percent), busing for integration (66 percent to 23 percent) and illegal immigration (75 percent to 12 percent).

A second A.J.C. poll, the results of which were released in September 1983, revealed a deep concern for Israel but a wide divergence of views: Jewish support for "territorial compromise" rose from 31 percent in 1982 to 42 percent in 1983. By 57 percent to 31 percent, the respondents rejected the view that American Jews should not criticize Israeli policy publicly and recorded varying amounts of disapproval for Israeli leaders: Sharon (41 percent), Begin (30 percent) and Peres (16 percent). Both polls suggest that large numbers of Jews are, by the Perlmutters' reckoning, actually or potentially "real anti-Semites"!

The efforts of some Jewish leaders to play the game of ethnic politics—to assume the role of bosses ready to deliver votes in return for policy commitments favorable to "Jewish interests"—were certainly not rewarded in the 1983 municipal elections in Philadelphia and Chicago. In both cities, twice as many Jews voted for blacks as did other whites—despite the fact that the defeated candidate in Chicago was Jewish.

Prominent among the leaders in the campaign to court Jews to change their political preferences are Social Democrats, U.S.A., and their cousins, the neoconservatives. Their strategy is simply to abandon Jewish liberal-humanist values in return for an official hard-line, pro-Israel and anti-Soviet foreign policy. The Social Democrats, with deep roots in Jewish political culture, have long since slighted domestic reform agendas, concentrating instead on attacking communism in all of its supposed forms, domestic and foreign. Without a political following, they have shrunk to what might be called a persuasion with a minuscule formal membership, focusing on influencing policy through a network of the faithful. They have found haven in think tanks (such as Freedom House), the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

Jewish neoconservative intellectuals—many of them children of the Jewish Social Democratic tradition—continue to play an outstanding role in this attempted political conversion of the Jews. They have contributed to it with essays in such journals as Norman Podhoretz's *Commentary* (an organ of the American Jewish Committee), projects

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and reports for rightist think tanks and publications (such as the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review*) and polemics such as Irving Kristol's denunciation of Jacobo Timerman's account of Argentine anti-Semitism. Nor is their role confined to opinion making. In increasing numbers, they have moved into decision-making posts, notably in the field of foreign policy. These intellectuals, for so long content to be outsiders, scornful of politics, have at last become insiders with a vengeance. And in the process of "making it," they are proceeding to enact a new version of *la trahison des clercs.*

It would be intolerable not to recognize and respond to the traumas suffered by the Jewish people in this country as a consequence of the Holocaust, the treatment of Soviet Jews, the rise of anti-Semitism both here and abroad, and, yes, the emergence of the Christian right on the political scene. But to politicize and exploit the attempts by Jews to heal those wounds and to reassert their Jewish identity—at a time when the solidarity of the Jews as a people is threatened by shrinking numbers, secularization, intermarriage and geographical dispersion—will only further isolate them and aggravate their plight.

Beyond those dangers, there is the still unexplored danger of Jewish attacks on mainstream Protestantism. For the first time in our history, Protestant churches are under attack, not only from their historic opponents on the evangelical right but from Jewish groups. It would be detrimental both to Jewish and to Christian interests if Jews contributed to the attacks by the Christian right on progressive Protestants and Catholics. Liberal Christians, on the whole, have supported Israel's right to exist within secure borders. Their opposition to Israel's military aggression and support for Palestinian autonomy are shared by many Jews. Most progressive Christians are enemies of Israel only in the eyes of Israel-right-or-wrong Jews.

The major stumbling block in the way of fruitful dialogue between Christians and Jews is how to live with the reality of the Jewish state. If establishment Jewish organizations such as the A.D.L. limit their interreligious relationships to fundamentalists because of their support for a militarily dominant and expansionist Israel, international understanding, a basic need in the nuclear age, will be seriously threatened. □

Rediscovery

JULIE SCHUMACHER

THE MORGESONS AND OTHER WRITINGS: Published and Unpublished. *By Elizabeth Stoddard. Edited by Lawrence Buell and Sandra A. Zagarell. University of Pennsylvania Press. 362 pp. $30. Paper $10.95.*

In an 1865 issue of *The Nation,* William Dean Howells called Elizabeth Stoddard's *Two Men* "one of the most original books written by an American woman." Other critics compared the New England author to Hawthorne, Melville and Tolstoy. Nevertheless, *Two Men,* like her finest novel, *The Morgesons,* failed to meet with the approval of the general public. Objects of short-lived critical acclaim, both books were quickly forgotten and remained so for a century.

The rediscovery of unjustly neglected women writers is always a fortunate occurrence, and especially so in Stoddard's case. In its portrayal of Victorian women as feisty, independent and sensual, her fiction was prematurely feminist: the female characters were too "strong," the prose too direct and sparse, the rumblings of social indictment too close to the surface. Because American readers didn't know how to respond to the books, Stoddard was advised to "pretty" her narrative and refine her characters. Unfortunately she eventually succumbed to this suggestion and thereafter produced more "palatable," less original work.

The editors of *The Morgesons and Other Writings* argue convincingly that the rediscovery of *The Morgesons* in particular will prompt a re-evaluation of nineteenth century women and their literature. For while the majority of Stoddard's fellow women writers, such as Sarah Orne Jewett and Kate Chopin, worked with the luxury of time and "a room of one's own" and were isolated, wealthy or single, Stoddard was middle class and married with children.

The Morgesons is the story of two young women in rebellion against the rigid moralism of their conservative Massachusetts environment. Cassandra Morgeson, disobedient and mischievous as a child, grows into a "lawless" young woman who becomes involved in a disastrous infatuation with a married cousin. Veronica, her younger sister, reacts in the opposite manner, secluding herself in her parents' home and refusing even to go to school. Veronica's explosive fits of temper (interspersed with queer, haunted moods and embarrassingly candid statements) provoke bouts of illness which cause her family to grant her a large measure of independence.

Though both girls' personalities are somewhat tempered by events—the death of their mother, the financial collapse of their father's business—they remain astonishingly blunt, ironic and even hostile throughout. Indeed, the absence of feminine restraint is one of the most gratifying characteristics of Stoddard's work—one is pleased to read at last of nineteenth-century women who could be as angry and disagreeable as they liked.

Stoddard herself was reported to be as sardonic and quick-tempered as her characters, and the portrait of Cassandra Morgeson is said to be largely autobiographical. It is Cassandra who most abhors the stifling social climate of her seaside village; restless, defiant and "boyishly" inquisitive, she longs for the openness of the water rather than the "dull uniformity" of the town, full of "decayed families as exclusive as they were shabby." A relentless social observer and critic, she does not spare her own family, whose house is characterized by "a perpetual changing of beds and the small talk of vacant minds." But despite the boredom, loneliness and frustration, a lightness of spirit pervades the work, and Stoddard infuses her smooth, pared-down prose with rewarding moments of humor.

Much of the collection displays a strenous rejection of male supremacy and domination, which is expressed with particular vehemence in the short stories and manuscripts. In "Lemorne Versus Huell" a woman hears her beloved's proposal of marriage only to realize that a declaration on *her* part is unnecessary. "I was not allowed to *give* myself," she marvels, "I was *taken.*" Similarly, in "Collected by a Valetudinarian," a woman who has chosen solitude over marriage exclaims, when her suitor abandons hope, "He has gone. I

Julie Schumacher is an editor and fiction writer. Her story "Reunion" was published in The Best American Short Stories 1983 *(Houghton Mifflin).*

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feel free." And in a wonderfully caustic moment in an 1857 newspaper column, Stoddard elaborates:

> Every man of you knows that . . . we women pull the wires of your physical and moral natures. What you are in character, for good or bad, depends on the little inferior creatures you chuck under the chin, or tuck under the arm, or beat black and blue, or slobber with kisses.

Though Stoddard's fierce independence will strike us as feminist, she probably would have balked at the label. An individualist, she complained after visiting the 1857 Women's Rights Convention of feeling "ashamed to hear from a woman such wholesale laudation of women." Rather than associate herself with a group or platform, she preferred to fight her battles alone, striving for equal footing in a male-dominated world.

In fact, because she regarded many women with disdain (and thought herself far more intelligent than most people of either sex), Stoddard was careful to adopt a rather androgynous stance in both her fiction and journalism, and to write on topics of equal importance to men and women. Although she did admire George Sand, Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Browning, she was highly critical of most women writers, believing them to be priggish, overly moral and devoid of sensual intuition. As she asked in a column for the *Daily Alta California*,

> Why will writers, especially female writers, make their heroines so indifferent to good eating, so careless about taking cold, and so impervious to all the creature comforts? . . . Is goodness . . . incompatible with the enjoyment of the senses?

That *The Morgesons and Other Writings* has emerged intact from a repressive, relatively antifeminist era is a literary triumph. Lawrence Buell and Sandra Zagarell have given Elizabeth Stoddard the long-awaited recognition she deserves; the book is attractive, well organized and comprehensive; it contains introductions, a biographical and critical essay, a chronology and extensive explanatory notes. It is gratifying to find that, even a century after the fact, candor will win out and courage be rewarded. As one of Stoddard's characters muses, "Shall I dare tell the truth about men and women? Who may speak if I can not? I fear not my unborn publisher." □

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THEATER.

PAUL BERMAN

Hurlyburly

So many people have grown up preferring movies to theater that it's necessary from time to time to point out ways in which theater is intrinsically more exciting—the way theater can use language, for instance. Words are freer on stage than they can ever be on screen. There are more of them, and they can do more things, frisk about, escape the laconic requirements of screen dialogue. Theater is among other things a branch of literature, and the kind of person who regards plays as an inferior form of movie might do better viewing them as a superior form of poetry recital. At least that's a useful way to see *Hurlyburly*, by David Rabe. The language in *Hurlyburly* is so luxuriant you can practically roll around in it. You find yourself laughing with delight one moment, shaking your head in astonishment the next, merely from the rhetorical glories exploding on the stage. The cast of seven consists mostly of movie actors, and I can see why they might feel thrilled to leave filmmaking behind for a few months and devote themselves to the arduousness of eight performances a week. For when in the movies do actors get to wrap their tongues around so many delicious words and phrases?

Hurlyburly offers the additional joy of stabbing Los Angeles in the back. The play is vicious on the subject of Hollywood degenerates. The casting directors and their nefarious associates, the aging screenwriter, the psychopathic character actor, the stripper, the girlfriend, the drifting teen-ager, have all wallowed so long in the stupefactions of TV, pop music, liquor and drugs that they can barely speak. They have lots to say; their lives are hitting bottom and the situation cries out for a fully specified report. But what words can come leaping from these addleheaded people's mouths? They are rhetorically bereft. They can express themselves only through endless raids on subcultural jargons—the jargons of Hollywood deals, of Hindu mysticism, of pretentious TV intellectuals, of the streets, of the drug culture, of what they imagine literary culture to be. Sometimes they rise to the dry wit of L.A. slang: "I mean, this guy isn't just semiweird, he's working on genuine berserk." More often expression fails entirely and they lapse into cursing or wave their hands and say, "blah blah blah," acknowledging that clichés have triumphed and there's no longer any point in pronouncing the words.

Rabe's achievement in constructing this L.A. verbal patchwork is really quite brilliant. It is the sort of thing that Saul Bellow is admired for, and it yields, in Rabe's hands, two excellent effects. One is bathos. You get the feeling his poor characters have clothed themselves in a series of languages that never quite fit, so that you're always conscious of an unhappy person awkwardly shuffling beneath that potato sack of ridiculous words. And of course the other effect is humor in a particularly American style. A good deal of English theater humor is produced by having a character wittily say less than he means, thereby revealing his supe-

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riority to the situation at hand. But in much American theater humor, the character inadvertently says more than he means, thereby revealing his inferiority while at the same time uttering a truth—which comes out funny. "It's hard enough to say what you're saying, let alone to consider the goddam implications." Rabe's degenerates are regular geniuses at this sort of inferiority. Trying to avoid saying anything intelligent, they clutch at one or another cliché, and say far more than anyone would have wanted.

The result is very funny and very biting, and I kept thinking, Good, good: it's like that in the land of the articulately inarticulate. Showing this sort of thing is a special virtue of the theater. But it would, of course, be better if the script could claim other virtues, too. *Hurlyburly* makes a stab at plot—something about a cocaine-snorting alcoholic casting director (William Hurt) pushing away everyone who loves him, which is most of the cast, only to discover that he has destroyed with his nasty mean comments the one fellow he did somehow like. There's also a love triangle. But no plot ever quite emerges from the murk. Then the play makes a stab at lofty philosophy. The stoned casting director ruminates on the meaninglessness of modern life as illustrated by neutron bombs and other matters. The maudlin, maundering speech suggests that *Hurlyburly* was bitten by a dog named Eugene O'Neill. "You know, Edward," his roommate (Ron Silver) says, "it's not the time that's dark, it's just you and this moonless California night."

Then there is a series of oddly self-lacerating satires or caricatures on such subjects as conventional ethnic casting in television (though *Hurlyburly* is itself cast along conventional ethnic lines, with the tall WASP as hero) and the stereotyping of Jews (though *Hurlyburly* itself deals in Jewish stereotypes, with the screenwriter offering a definition of karma that makes it sound like a cosmic moneylender). The oddest thing is how the play deals with the dim view these men take of women, which is presented as still another symptom of cultural disaster. But the play itself offers a disastrous view of women. The teen-age girl (Cynthia Nixon) appears to feel no trepidation at the prospect of sex with a roomful of obnoxious older men, the genuine berserker prominent among them. When the play requires further promiscuity, the stripper (Judith Ivey) obliges with some offstage sex in front of her traumatized 6-year-old daughter, and when the play requires a little tenderness, the same stripper turns out to be a model mother. At least misogyny keeps the audience awake, which is its function in *Hurlyburly*. Wow, you keep saying, these people are really crude. Then they get cruder. Wow! "Do you want to fuck me or anything before you go to sleep?" the teen-ager says with utmost casualness to the man who lets her camp out in his living room. But in the audience you don't take these words so casually. Gee whiz, you think—and the lights dim and the play is over.

The audience the night I was there included a lot of actors. Actors have excellent reason to flock to *Hurlyburly*. The performances by Hurt, Nixon, Silver, Jerry Stiller and Sigourney Weaver are really very good; Ivey and Harvey Keitel (as the berserker) are superb; the ensemble together makes a believable group, no small achievement. Mike Nichols's direction seems to undercut the play in some instances, as when he has Hurt and Weaver do their love scene raunchy, where delicacy is required. But then character and depth aren't *Hurlyburly*'s strong points anyway, and where the play does have strength, in its American speech and its spaced-out L.A. humor, the direction is supremely successful. Writers, too, or anyone who loves American speech, might want to flock to *Hurlyburly* for these strong points. But what about the audience whose concern is neither acting nor prose but who want the whole of what good theater should offer? The special virtues of theater and also the unspecial virtues? That audience may prefer to regard *Hurlyburly* as muscle flexing on Rabe's part, preparatory to some greater play.

A word about the political campaign and its progress through the New York City theater world. Among theater people at least, alarm over Reagan has led to something. Last month thirty young actors plus a playwright or two formed an independent voter registration committee called Artists in Action (212-971-9085), discovered to their amazement that other people in the arts were also eager for politicking and set up voter registration tables all over Manhattan. Here no gloom of fog has descended on the forces of truth and justice. Why hasn't the press reported this sort of thing, an authentic grass-roots campaign? Meanwhile a Committee for a Democratic Senate (212-686-4905) has arisen with similar spontaneity and independence for the purpose of staging a Broadway extravaganza at Town Hall, October 29. The evening of music, acting and politics will be called "Take the Senate, Turn the Tide" and will benefit seven electoral races around the country in which a reasonably sane member of civilization stands a chance of defeating a lunatic barbarian. Ticket buyers forward! More on theater mobilization in a future column. □

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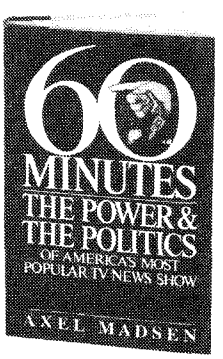

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FILMS.

ANDREW KOPKIND

The Brother From Another Planet

John Sayles makes movies to scale—or is it movies to go? Alongside the vast supermarket of Hollywood epics, blockbusters and high-concept product, his cinema of convenience is sparsely stocked with snacks and munchables: a lesbian sandwich on wry, lightly chilled 1960s nostalgia and soul food to take out—far out. Sayles can execute a movie from blank paper to answer-print in the time it takes the conglomerate filmmakers in L.A. to negotiate their drug deals. *The Brother From Another Planet* came to him one night in a dream (already carrying the appealing title *Assholes From Outer Space*); it was written in one week, shot in four, and soon landed in Cannes to serve as a topic of cocktail conversation with Andrew Sarris. And all for a low, low $350,000, with deferred salaries, credit crunches and the usual financial nightmares of independent production. Best of all, Sayles keeps a sense of humor about the whole hectic process and pokes fun at the megalomaniacs of the industry: early in *Brother* there's a brief shot of a sign for Harlem's Cotton Club, just to remind film insiders that Francis Coppola's picture of the same name *still* has not been released.

Smallness of scale and brevity of moment are the most attractive aspects of the four films Sayles has directed. The specific subjects under his consideration hit the high spots of current politics and sociology: *The Return of the Secaucus Seven* was about the evolution of the radical generation of the 1960s; *Baby, It's You* was about that generation's origins; *Lianna* dealt with sexual politics; and *Brother* has to do with racism. But the cultural message beneath the plot is always the same: movies need not be escapes, rituals or mystifications of ordinary experience. They can instead be mirrors for self-evaluation and parables of real life. Method and style are crucial to Sayles's purpose. His movies must be accessible, unpretentious, low-tech and narrow-gauge; in other words, cheap and quick. Grandeur, sweep and finesse distance a production from its audience, the way a *haute couture* show makes clothes into myths or a three-star meal transforms dinner into a dream.

The Brother From Another Planet takes its cue from the science fiction genre, but not its sense or sensibility. The Brother (the marvelous Joe Morton) is a fugitive slave from some distant world who hurtles to Earth on a well-traveled intergalactic railroad. There's a bit of blurred spaceship technology before the titles, but Sayles has no interest in (or budget for) Kubrickian fantasies. His special effects, and the Bro's special talents, are kept to a minimum. The fugitive has a luminous finger which can regenerate limbs, heal wounds, repair video games and open cash registers. He can hear conversations from long ago in empty rooms and leap halfway up tall buildings in a single bound. His alien *pièce de résistance* is the ability to remove an eye, which can keep watch on its surroundings and transmit all it has seen when replaced in its socket.

But the Brother is no superman. He is almost unendurably sensitive to the suffering of his black brothers and sisters in Harlem, that ghetto of the universe where he naturally finds a home. Like a mute messiah (he never makes a peep), the Brother assumes the pain and oppression of those he walks among: an Oriental grocery clerk calls the police on him for stealing a pear, a white employer treats him like dirt, black punks fall upon him and he shoots up with heroin when he finds a young addict dead with a needle in his arm. He is a gentle and defenseless stranger in a land that must not be so terribly strange to him; a slave's life on the other planet is clearly no piece of cake. Two white bounty hunters (Sayles and David Strathairn) are on his tail, but as bad as conditions may be around 125th Street, the Brother desperately wants to stay on Earth.

The messianism gets maudlin at times, and the movie's good intentions may be hard even for liberal audiences to swallow whole. A long sequence in which the Brother finds the white yuppie who controls the ghetto drug trade is both overblown and simple-minded, and fits uncomfortably with the mood Sayles has created. But Sayles's sense of humor and his wonderful way with words are always available to effect a rescue. There's no danger that he will turn into Stanley Kramer before the final frame. Little theatrical mono-

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logues and set pieces dot the narrative like jewels: an endearing young hustler plays card tricks on the subway, then asks the Brother, "Do you want me to make all the white people disappear?" just as the train leaves Columbus Circle for 125th Street; the bounty hunters make their rounds like robot twins, speaking lines out of *Dragnet* and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*; a Rastafarian takes the Brother on a Faustian walk through Harlem nighttown; and two absurd Midwestern white boys barge into a Harlem bar for several hours of meaningful conversation with a mute black alien.

All this takes place in a cozy community constructed around the bar, where a complement of amusing denizens takes up the slack moments in the plot. They provide diversions, which are not really digressions, for the community *is* the movie—it is the way Sayles's constituency (more than an audience) can enter his country. Jean Renoir built the same kind of neighborhoods in his mid-1930s movies (typically, in *The Crime of Monsieur Lange*) and there are glimpses of other landscape signatures in some recent Australian offerings—for example, Gillian Armstrong's working-class corner of Sidney in *Starstruck*. But most American movies have abandoned their sense of the community for milieus that are either mythic or exotic.

Sayles rushes in where most other filmmakers would not even think to tread. What straight white male, even with the best social conscience in the world, would risk making a film about lesbian relationships in the 1980s? Who wants to tempt the gods of commerce and the gurus of correct politics by tackling black life in Harlem? Sayles seems oblivious to the cultural constraints that limit the rest of us. He gets away with it, too, by keeping his sights low and his eyes clear. He does not claim to offer the last word on any of his subjects, nor does he pretend to produce masterpieces or hope to gross zillions. Each of his films is incomplete, tentative, exploratory. That is a style that Godard and some American filmmakers tried in the 1960s, but they always took themselves and their politics too seriously and in the end foundered when their integrity was unmasked as ego. Sayles should have no such problems. His one-man alternative cinema is a real treat, and if you watch closely, he can make Hollywood disappear. □

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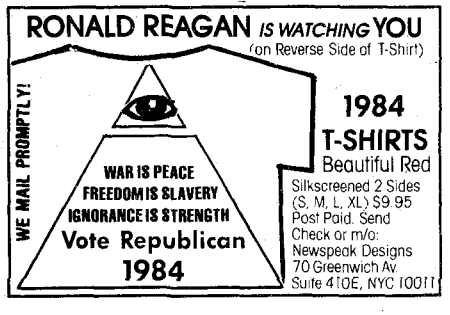

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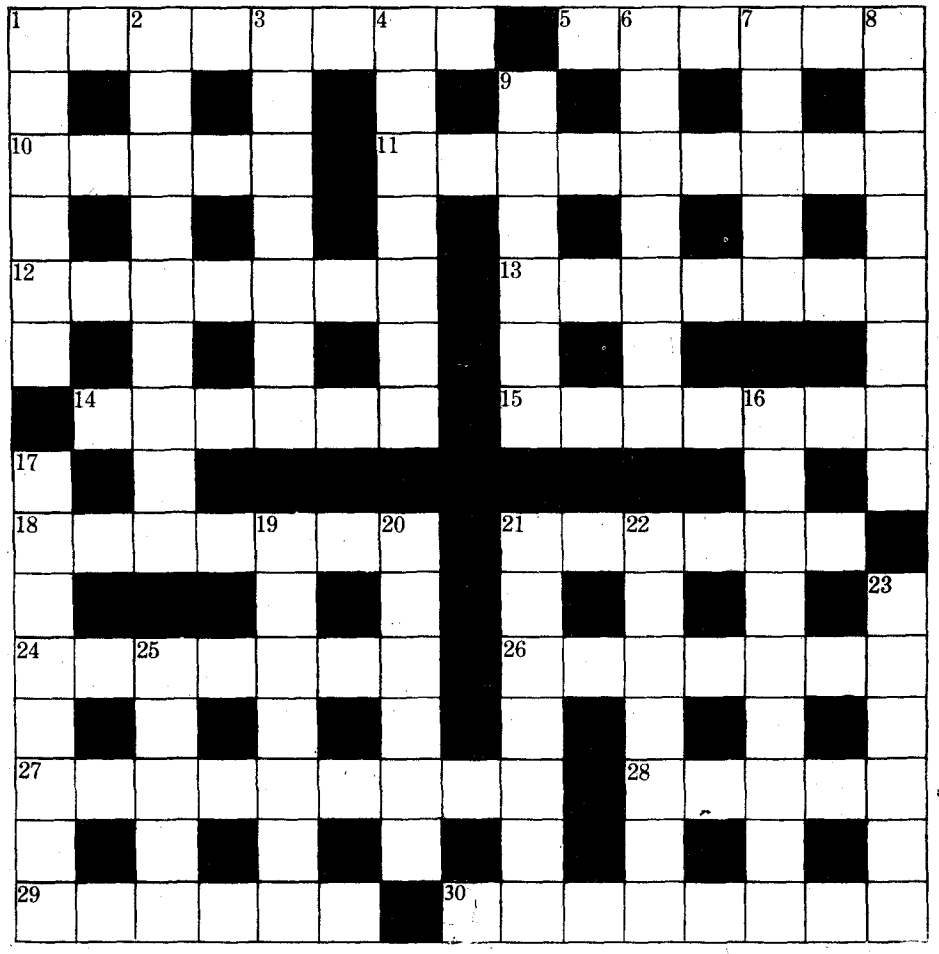

ACROSS

1 Shows this ibex is camouflaged! (8)
5 See 4 down
10 See 12
11 Came into being in the ride—it's wild! (9)
12, 10 and 9 down Copper Kentucky rifle, of sorts? (3,4,3,2,3,3)
13 A lion is let loose, which might imply a little hanky-panky. (7)
14 and 24 Implying nothing for just a second? (6,4,3)
15 Questioning whether the one belonging to the woman might be the cleaning type, or just something to make the joint safe? (7)
18 In the main it might involve race. (7)
21 By the sound of it, makes earnest petition or seizes something for dinner, to offer some commendation. (6)
24 See 14
26 One might have to, if you want the musicians to fight. (When black death implied?) (7)
27 Where you might drop the silver before picking up the plate, I see by the sound of it. (This shift is popular with some.) (9)
28 In part of the church, I get a little unsophisticated! (5)
29 Strange! It might be let out around it—it's a way for the youngster to move. (6)
30 Makes provision for what one does in making notes for the band, perhaps. (8)

DOWN

1 Ascent might be possible if one makes the laws this way. (6)
2 Making things difficult by filling the dirty clothes basket? (9)
3 Bare skin? Nothing on? Comic! (7)
4 and 5 across The index of fire? (7,6)
6 Manufactured sadiron which implies success at pressing. (7)
7 Perhaps money taken in on several occasions by a revolutionary general. (5)
8 One quality of Concord Bridge, according to Emerson. (8)
9 See 12 across
16 Single van constructed to show what Legree's bosses were doing. (9)
17 Drag out something in favor of propaganda, perhaps. (8)
19 Restrain the return of little Lemuel, going to market. (7)
20 Parcels out something, the French coming up with a good deal of it. (6)
21 One of those who dashed away with Santa. (7)
22 There's a song about people of the old country. (7)
23 But such creatures can also multiply rapidly. (6)
25 A check might be like Franklin's key. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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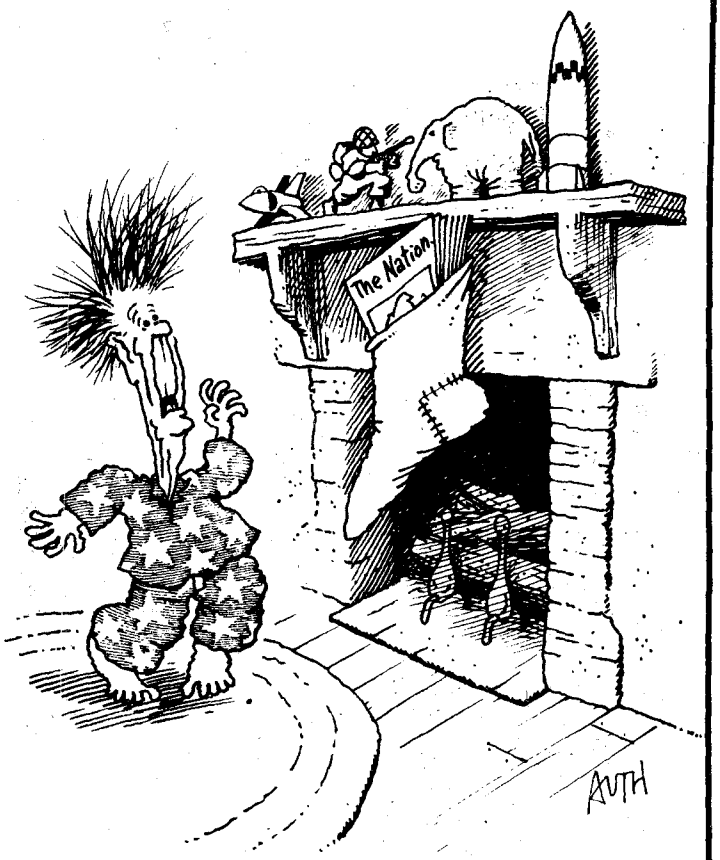

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